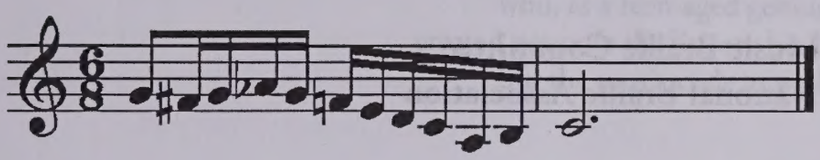
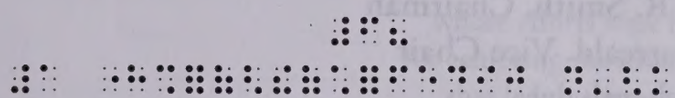
Handbook for Braille Music Transcribers

Third Edition





Edited by the
NBA Music Braille Committee

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The mission of the National Braille Association, Inc.
is to provide continuing education to those who prepare braille, and to
provide braille materials to persons who are visually impaired.

APH Libraries

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Dedication

The NBA Music Braille Committee dedicates this publication to the honor of:

Louis Braille,
who, as a teen-aged genius,
created not only the literary braille code,
but the music code as well.

Bettye Krolick,
whose efforts were largely responsible
for achieving the international agreements
that led to the promulgation of the
New International Manual of Braille Music Notation,
and who has been a teacher and source of inspiration to us all.

Robert Stepp,
whose technological genius
might never have come to the aid of the braille world
had he not already been a gifted and dedicated musician.

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Preface

This handbook is written for all music transcribers, whether beginners or experienced. The 1976 and 1993 editions of the NBA *Handbook for Braille Music Transcribers* are no longer available, but the need for this type of reference book is as strong as ever.

This reference should always be used in conjunction with *Music Braille Code 1997* (BANA) and De Garmo, *Introduction to Braille Music Transcription*, Second Edition, 2005 (NLS/LOC). It is impossible to include all types of music or answer all the questions that arise with each new transcription. It is hoped that this book will serve as a starting point.

A music transcriber should never hesitate to seek help when working with a new type of music. It is advisable to braille a few pages and send them to a member of the NBA Music Braille Committee for evaluation before spending a lot of time on an unfamiliar format. The most convenient means of communication for those who have an internet connection is through the "Ask an Expert" service on the NBA website www.nationalbraille.org.

Much of the material in this handbook has come from various sources, such as NBA *Bulletin* articles, NBA conference workshops, and the previous editions of the handbook. Some has been compiled especially for this publication. It is intended that further topics may be added from time to time as supplements, and that corrections and updates will be published in the NBA Bulletin and on the NBA website.

NBA Music Braille Committee

Acknowledgements

While authorship of individual articles in this handbook are not ascribed, the contributions of the following committee members, whose special knowledge in certain areas have been especially significant, deserve recognition:

Christina Davidson and Richard Taesch, guitar music;
Heidi Lehmann, harmonic analysis and figured bass;
Richard Taesch, Heidi Lehmann and Beverly McKenney, textbook formats and procedures.

Lawrence Smith, chairman of the committee, served as the coordinating editor.
Luci Giglio produced the typesetting, as she also had done for the second edition.

Thanks are due to Rachel Grider, who provided advice from a student's perspective about educational materials.

General Introduction

Steps in preparing and completing the music braille transcription

The parent code of the music code is the literary code. The rules of *Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription* are followed when there is not a specific contradictory rule in the literary or music codes. *Music Braille Code 1997* takes precedence if there is a conflict between that code and the others.

Pencil-number measures throughout if the score is not already pre-numbered by the publisher. Remember to number the measures of first and second endings (voltas) consecutively. If the measures are pre-numbered you may find that the measures of voltas have alternate instead of consecutive numbering; in that case, you must follow the print, and it might be advisable to include that fact on the Transcribers's Notes page.

1. Mark situations for repeats and doublings and their terminations. Mark the beginnings and endings of long slurs.
2. Mark any other signs such as octave signs which, for a beginner especially, might be helpful reminders.
3. Do a rough draft first.
4. Proofread sign-for-sign, note-for-note. Be patient; proofreading normally consumes much more time than the actual transcribing. Check the order of signs in relation to the note. Most transcribers prefer to proofread a simulated braille print-out, away from the computer, rather than the screen image.
5. Make the corrections in the final copy from the corrected rough draft.
6. Repeat step 4, proofing against the print, not against the rough draft. Reading braille signs into a recording device and then following the print during playback can be effective. If you have learned the ASCII equivalents of the sixty-three braille characters it may be helpful to proofread those symbols in place of (or in addition to) the simulated braille characters. Some of the computer-assisted transcribing programs have very productive proofreading tools.
7. Proofread the timing separately from steps 4 and 6. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough. Check by reading only the value dots of the notes which, with a little practice, become readily identifiable. Rarely will a count have to be checked against the print. This step is very much worth the extra effort; you will be surprised at what will turn up.
8. Check numbered sequences—measure numbers, page numbers, section numbers, exercise numbers, rehearsal reference marks—as well as running heads.

Another suggestion, especially for a beginning transcriber or for the transcription of a very complicated passage in the music, is to make a second rough draft without looking at the first one and then compare the two.

Reference sources for print music notation

Many times transcribers come across unfamiliar music notation in the print. Local libraries, bookstores (don't forget second-hand ones), and professional musicians in your area can often provide the books or information you need. Online search engines, references and booksellers may be extremely helpful.

Useful references

Ask an Expert. National Braille Association Website. www.nationalbraille.org.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition. University of Chicago Press, 2003. Also online: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.

Anthony Donato. *Preparing Music Manuscript.* Greenwood Press, 1977.

Grove Music Online. www.grovemusic.com.

Don Freund. *Instrument Studies for Eyes and Ears* (ISFEE). Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. www.music.indiana.edu/som/composition/isfee. Username: isfee; password: donfreund.

Erhard Karkoschka. *Notation in New Music.* International Thomson Publishing, 1972.

Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 6th Edition. Oxford University Press, 2006. Also online: www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Music Educators' Network for the Visually Impaired. www.menvi.org.

Don Michael Randel. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music.* Belknap Press. Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2003.

Gardner Read. *Music Notation*, 2nd Edition. Taplinger, 1979.

Carl A. Rosenthal. *Practical Guide to Music Notation.* MCA Music, 1967.

Richard Rostall. *The Notation of Western Music.* St. Martin's Press, 1982.

Stanley Sadie. *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* Grove Dictionaries, Inc., Second Edition 2003 (29 volumes). Also online: www.grovemusic.com.

Kurt Stone. *Music Notation in the Twentieth Century.* W. W. Norton & Co., 1980.

Foreign language dictionaries will also prove helpful, especially when transcribing music published in another country or vocal music in a foreign language. *The Chicago Manual of Style* contains a section on foreign languages that is particularly helpful.

Guide to transcribing the common music formats

References, where to look for more detail, are to:

De Garmo, *Introduction to Braille Music Transcription* (Second Edition, 2005) (DG)
Music Braille Code 1997 (MBC)

Abbreviations:

MN—measure numbers
RM—reference marks
OM—octave marks
RT—restatement of ties
IN—direction of intervals
RO—runover lines
WS—word-sign expressions
RP—repeat devices
PT—page turn device
CS—chord symbols in short-form scoring
HD—heading at an important change
CD—coda or other major section
SS—song section such as refrain or chorus

Instrumental solo, unaccompanied

Single-line format is used to transcribe music for unaccompanied instrumental solos. Music is divided into segments. (DG 71)

MN measure number with number sign at left margin for each new segment (DG 71)
RM not applicable
OM at the beginning of each new braille line (DG 42)
RT at the beginning of a new braille page, at the beginning of new segment as needed and after major interruption of music; not used at beginning of new line within a segment (DG 76)
IN read downward in treble and alto clefs and upward in tenor and bass clefs (DG 347)
RO indented to third cell (DG 71)
WS all placed within the music line (DG 97–103)
RP all available (DG Chs. 17-20)
PT within music line; numeral not included when only one per braille page (DG 7)
CS aligned with the beginning of every measure on line below the music line (DG 421); only single-line segments may be used when chord symbols are present
HD centered, capitalized and punctuated as music heading; include change of signature if present; no blank line before or after; no word signs (DG 105)
CD *short*: "Coda" between word signs at the left margin above the segment (DG 211)
long and/or including signature change: treated as heading at important change (DG 211)

Single band or orchestral part

A minor variant of single-line format, a single band or orchestral part is formatted exactly as outlined above except for the addition of reference marks.

RM *measure numbers used as RM*: no special treatment; start a new segment
other numbers or letters used as RM: placed at the left margin between word signs on a line above the new segment (DG 77)

Keyboard

Music for keyboard instruments is transcribed in basic bar-over-bar format. Music is arranged in parallels with measures vertically aligned. A parallel may not be divided between braille pages. (DG Ch. 24)

MN measure number without number sign placed at the left margin (DG 310)
RM placed at left margin between word signs on the line above a new parallel
OM before the first note of every measure in all music lines (DG 310)
RT at the beginning of the new parallel as needed and after any major interruption of the music (MBC 79)
IN read downward in the right-hand part and upward in the left-hand part (DG 347)
RO allowed only if one hand part cannot be completed on one line and both hands cannot be divided at the same point (DG 313) or where the parallel is reduced to a single part (DG 418)
WS *short/long at beginning of measure*: leave out of alignment (DG 314, 315)
short/long mid-measure: no alignment between hand parts (DG 317)
long at beginning of parallel: may be placed on a free line above the parallel, enclosed between word signs and indented 2 cells beyond the hand sign (DG 317)
RP all available, subject to some restrictions (DG 320-322)
PT placed in all music lines and aligned; numeral not included if only 1 page turn per braille page
CS aligned with the first music sign of each measure and placed in an additional line below the parallel (DG 420)
HD indented 2 cells beyond the hand sign, capitalized and punctuated as music heading; include change of signature if present; no blank line before or after; no word signs (DG 323)
CD *short*: place "Coda" between word signs at the left margin above the segment. (*Note: no consensus; some transcribers place between word signs and indent 2 cells beyond the hand sign.*)
long and/or including signature change: treated as heading at important change

Instrumental solo with keyboard accompaniment

While basic **single-line format** is used to transcribe the solo part of this format, the **bar-over-bar format** for the accompaniment is expanded to include a solo outline. Measures in all three lines are vertically aligned. (DG Ch. 28)

Solo part

Transcribed in basic single-line format (DG 394) with the addition of reference marks as in a single band or orchestral part.

Accompaniment part

MN	measure number without number sign placed at left margin of the solo outline (DG 394)
RM	as bar-over-bar
OM	before every measure in every line of the parallel
RT	as bar-over-bar
IN	as bar-over-bar
RO	as bar-over-bar
WS	as bar-over-bar; long word-sign expression removed from the parallel is placed above the solo outline (DG 395)
RP	available, subject to bar-over-bar restrictions
PT	aligned in all music lines
CS	as bar-over-bar
HD	as bar-over-bar
CD	as bar-over-bar

Instrumental ensemble

This more complex type of instrumental music is based on bar-over-bar format but with some significant variations. Two free lines are required between parallels; the second may contain MN, RM, or WS. (DG Ch. 32)

MN used if they appear in the print (DG 441) or may be used when there are no numbers or letters in the print (MBC 26.16); if used, placed between word signs and indented 1 cell to the right of the 1st music cell (DG 446)
RM placed between word signs and indented 1 cell to the right of the 1st music cell (DG 446)
OM before the first note of each new braille line; not required in each measure (DG 444)
RT in new parallel or after major interruption of the music
IN all intervals read upward (DG 441)
RO possible when only a few parts require measure division (DG 448; Example 26.6 in MBC)
WS no alignment attempted within the music line (DG 444); long expressions may be removed from the parallel and placed between word signs on a free line above the parallel and aligned with the measure to which they refer (DG 445)
RP may use only measure repeat and part-measure repeat, and then only if the original and the repeats fall in the same line of braille (DG 448)
PT aligned in all music lines
CS aligned with the beginning of each measure on an additional line of the parallel
HD centered, capitalized and punctuated as music heading; include change of signature if present; no blank line before or after; no word signs
CD *no consensus: a suggested placement is between word signs and indented 1 cell to the right of the 1st music cell.*

Vocal solo, unaccompanied

The simplest form of vocal music consists of a 2-line parallel known as line-by-line format. The word line is transcribed first, beginning at the left margin; the music line appears below, indented to cell 3.

MN number sign plus measure number placed at left margin of word line only for selected parallels (DG 234)
RM not applicable
OM at the beginning of every new music line (DG 232)
RT at the beginning of each new music line as needed and after any major interruption of the music
IN not applicable
RO may run over either the word line or the music line but not both within the same parallel; runovers are indented to cell 5 in either case (DG 231)
WS placed in music line as per single-line format (DG 232)
RP no numeral repeats may be used; measure and part-measure repeats used provided original and repetition can be placed within the same parallel (DG 236)
PT page turn device including page number placed in the music line (DG 232)
CS aligned with syllables below the word line (DG 404ff)
HD centered, capitalized and punctuated as music heading; include signature change if present; no blank lines, no word signs
SS placed at left margin, italicized or fully-capitalized per print, at the beginning of a new parallel, followed by a space and the text of the word line. (DG 234)

Single choral part

Transcribers may be asked to lift a single part from a choral ensemble. A single choral part is treated as an unaccompanied vocal solo using line-by-line format with the addition of rehearsal marks. Rehearsal marks are treated differently depending upon whether or not measure numbers are in use in the choral score.

RM *actual measure numbers used as rehearsal marks*: measure number with number sign placed at margin of the word line (DG 242)
letters/numbers used as rehearsal marks and no measure numbers in use in the score: letter or number enclosed between word signs and placed at margin of the word line (DG 242)
letters/numbers used as rehearsal marks and measure numbers in use in the score: letter or number enclosed between word signs and placed at left margin of a free line above the parallel (DG 242)

Vocal solo, accompanied

This variation closely resembles its instrumental counterpart, the accompanied instrumental solo. Basic **line-by-line format** is used to transcribe the solo part. For the keyboard accompaniment, **bar-over-bar format** is expanded to include a solo outline. Measures in all three lines of the accompaniment parallel are vertically aligned.

Solo part

Transcribed in **line-by-line format** with the addition of reference marks as in a single choral part.

Accompaniment part

MN measure number without number sign placed at left margin of the solo outline (DG 394); occasional coordination of measure numbers between the solo part and the accompaniment recommended
RM as bar-over-bar
OM before every measure in every line of the parallel
RT as bar-over-bar
IN as bar-over-bar
RO as bar-over-bar
WS as bar-over-bar
RP *solo outline*: include only notes, rests, ties and accidentals
keyboard: subject to bar-over-bar restrictions
PT aligned in all lines of the parallel; must include the page number
CS as bar-over-bar
HD as bar-over-bar
SS placed between word signs at the left margin above the parallel

Choral ensemble

This most complex of vocal music formats may require multiple word and music lines in a fusion of **line-by-line** and **bar-over-bar** formats. Voice parts are introduced by their abbreviations in the first parallel of every new page and after every change in assignment. Unlike instrumental ensembles, no blank line need be left between parallels.

MN placed at the margin in a free line above the parallel; some or all parallels may be numbered depending upon print usage (DG 451)

RM placed at the margin in a free line above the parallel; if both measure numbers and reference marks in use, two free lines are employed with the reference mark on the first free line and measure number on the 2nd (DG 451)

OM before the first note of each new music line for each vocal part (DG 232)

RT at the beginning of new music line as needed and after any major interruption of the music

IN read downward in the soprano and alto parts and upward in tenor and bass parts (DG 450)

RO word lines may not run over unless there is only one word line in the parallel; music lines may not run over unless the parallel has been reduced to a single part (DG 450)

WS word-sign expressions are not excluded from alignment (DG 445); long word-sign expressions may be placed between word signs in a free line between the last word line and the first music line, indented 2 cells beyond the first cell of the music line

RP no numeral repeats; measure and part-measure repeats only if both original and repetition may be placed within the same parallel (DG 236)

PT page turn device plus page number placed in all music lines and aligned (DG 232)

CS aligned with the beginning of each measure on an additional last line of the parallel

HD centered, capitalized and punctuated as music heading; include change of signature if present; no blank lines; no word signs

SS placed between word signs on a free line above the parallel or above the measure number

Computer-assisted music transcription

Six-key input of music with translation for text

Most braille transcribers today use computers. Music transcribers generally employ one of the many available applications that accommodate six-key typing, assigning six of the computer's keys to function like the keys of a Perkins BrailleWriter, and using the space-bar and "enter" keys to insert blank cells and to advance to a new line. These applications provide additional welcome capabilities: delete, copy-and-paste, find-and-replace, save, and print.

Some of the programs are also capable of translating literary text from a word processor, either separate or integral, into braille. If there are extensive literary passages in the music publication, the transcriber may use the program to *translate* those passages, and *transcribe* the music using six-key entry.

A further advantage that some of the programs provide is an on-screen back-translation of the braille symbols, either interpreted (correctly reading contractions), or as sign-by-sign ASCII symbols. Some transcribers use the interpreted display to proofread the literary content of the transcription. Some have learned to recognize the ASCII equivalents of the sixty-three braille characters and can proofread the music content that way as well.

When a transcription is completed, the transcriber may send it directly to an embossing machine, or may send the electronic file by any means to someone else for embossing. When a transcriber has the luxury of having his work proofread by another person, it is often most efficient to exchange the electronic files via e-mail or on disk.

Music translation software

There are a number of computer programs worldwide that can be used to translate print music into music braille. The two that are easily available in the U. S. and Canada are *Goodfeel* from Dancing Dots in Philadelphia, and *Toccata* from Pentronics in Australia, which is represented by Opus Technologies in San Diego, California.

Goodfeel or *Toccata* is the actual translator. In order for the translator to do its job well, the print music must be carefully prepared. *Goodfeel* takes its input from an independent music editing software program; *Toccata* has an integrated print input and editing program. In either case, if the print music is taken from a scanner or other source that provides merely a picture, the picture must first be interpreted by an optical character recognition (OCR) program. *Toccata* comes packaged with an OCR program, and *Goodfeel* comes packaged with both an OCR program and a music notation program.

The objectives of the editing of the print are to assure that all parts in all measures are rhythmically complete and correct, and that every marking of every kind is associated with the most relevant note. It is true that the person who is preparing the print need not know much, or anything at all, of braille. That person must be thoroughly knowledgeable about print music notation. If the print music is edited perfectly, the braille translation will be accurate.

If you are a certified and experienced music transcriber, using a translation program will often not save you a great deal of time; editing the print may take as much time as doing the brailling directly would take. Whether you are a transcriber or not, using a translator you can produce usable and accurate music braille as long as the music is not very complex and is in the most common media. If you are a transcriber, you may be able to "fine-tune" the resulting braille by applying more sophisticated techniques than have been programmed into the translator. The translation programs work well with instrumental and vocal solo parts, keyboard music of intermediate complexity, and even accompanied songs.

You may get information and trial versions of the translation programs from:

Dancing Dots
1754 Quarry Lane
P.O. Box 927
Valley Forge, PA 19482
(610) 783-6692
www.dancingdots.com

Opus Technologies
13333 Thunderhead Street
San Diego, CA 92129-2329
(858) 538-9401
opus@opustec.com

Quick Reference Charts

Basic music symbols

Notes

ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la	si
C	D	E	F	G	A	B

Rests

Eighth & 128th

Quarter & 64th

Half & 32nd

Whole & 16th

Dotted notes: etc.

Dotted rests: etc.

Octave marks:

1st octave (on the piano) 2nd octave 3rd octave 4th octave (Middle C) 5th octave 6th octave 7th octave

Accidentals:

sharp flat natural double flat double sharp

Fingering:

1st finger 2nd finger 3rd finger 4th finger 5th finger

Order of signs: accidental-octave-note-finger

4th octave E-flat half with 3rd finger

2nd octave F-sharp whole with 5th finger

Bar line between measures: Space

Double bar line at end of composition:

Double bar line at end of section:

Key signatures:

1 sharp 2 sharps 3 sharps 4 sharps 5 sharps 6 sharps 7 sharps

1 flat 2 flats 3 flats 4 flats 5 flats 6 flats 7 flats

Time signatures:

common time cut time 4/4 time 3/2 time 3/4 time 6/8 time

Combined signatures:

2 flats & 4/4 time

3 sharps & 9/8 time

4 flats & cut time

Bracket slur: opening closing

Simple slur:

Double slur:

General order of signs in relation to a note

Preceding the note

marginal hand sign
clef sign
forward repeat sign
first or second ending sign
reminder tie
change of clef sign
change of hand sign
pedal depression
simple word-sign expression
line of continuation sign
opening bracket slur or overlapping slur
music comma
triplet or irregular-grouping sign
larger or smaller value sign
up-bow or down-bow
accidental(s) for ornament
    (upper before lower)
ornament or arpeggio
signs of expression or execution
    staccato or staccatissimo
    accent
    tenuto
    any others of these signs
accidental
octave mark

Following the note

dot
finger mark
interval
finger mark for interval
tie for interval
fractioning or tremolo sign
fermata
single slur, slur between staves,
    or opening double slur
closing bracket slur
tie, chord tie, accumulating arpeggio
termination sign for line of continuation
    or "hairpin"
breath mark
music comma
pedal release
closing bar, backward repeat,
    measure-division, or in-accord
music hyphen

Blank lines

Leave a blank line:

- before the music heading
- before the beginning of a new movement
- before and after the name of the part
- before and after the title of a movement or a separate piece in an anthology
- before "THE END" (only if there is room on the page)
- between the last line of music and the copyright information in an anthology
- (two blank lines) between parallels in an instrumental ensemble score
- between parallels in vocal music for beginning readers
- between parallels in keyboard music for beginning readers
- when switching between music and literary text
- (as many blank lines as necessary) to position a footnote at the bottom of a page

Do not leave a blank line:

- between the music heading and the first line of music or lyrics
- before a rehearsal reference mark except in an instrumental ensemble score
- before a new music heading if it is not at the beginning of a movement
- before or after a section title if it is not at the beginning of a movement
- between the last line of music and the beginning of a second verse of lyrics
- before the line of separation above a footnote if there is room for the line and the footnote at the bottom of the page unless blank lines are required to position the footnote at the bottom of the page
- between parallels in a choral ensemble score

Measure and part-measure repeat signs

Both measure and part-measure repeat signs can be used if:

- original measure or part-measure is exactly the same
- original is the same but in a different octave
- fingering is shown in original but not in repetition
- there is an added or different expression mark at the beginning or end of the repetition

Measure repeat signs can be used:

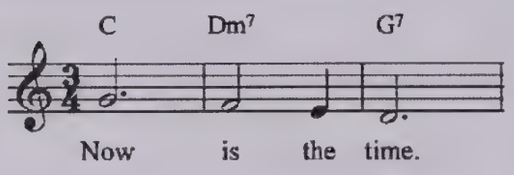
- at the beginning of a new parallel except at the beginning of a braille page
- if original measure contains a print forward or backward repeat

Part-measure repeat signs:

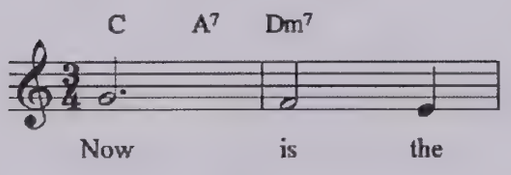
- can be used for the same in-accord parts in successive measures
- cannot be used at the beginning of a new measure
- cannot be used at the beginning of a line or parallel
- should not cross the beat, except in the most obvious cases

Positioning chord symbols below lyrics

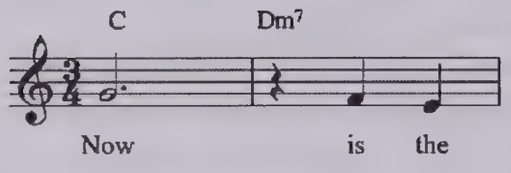
Chord and syllable sounded together; vertically aligned:



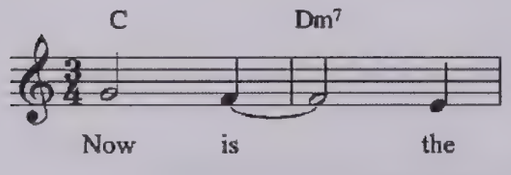
Two chords within syllable; hyphen as first cell of second chord symbol shows continuity:



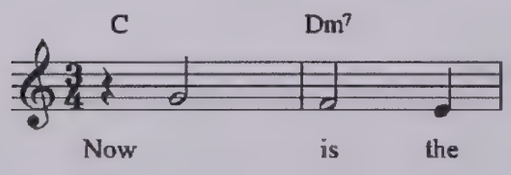
Chord sounded before syllable; chord two cells left of syllable:



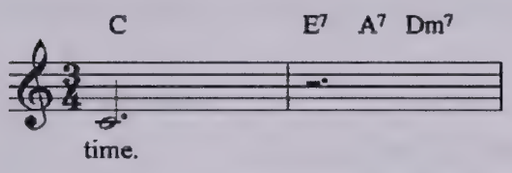
Chord sounded during syllable; hyphen is aligning element in chord:



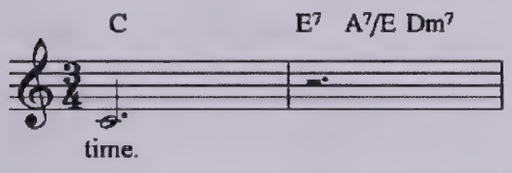
Chord sounded before syllable at beginning of song; measure number gives space for chord:



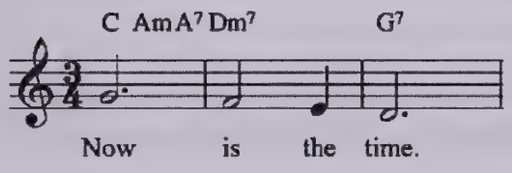
Chord(s) played during rest after end of text; chord after last letter of lyrics:



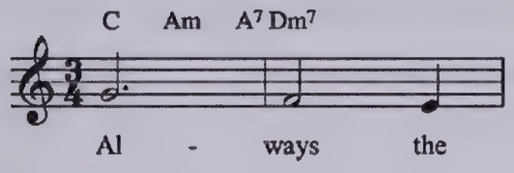
Space required following chord symbol that contains two capital letters:



Spaces and leading hyphens in lyrics when chord symbols are longer than lyrics:



Hyphens needed when syllables of a word are separated by intervening chord symbols:



Reminder ties and accidentals

Ties

Restate a tie:

- at the beginning of a new parallel in bar-over-bar format
- at the beginning of a new section or segment in single-line or line-by-line format
- in either part of an in-accord at the beginning of a new segment or parallel
- at the beginning of a new braille page
- after any major interruption

Do not restate a tie:

- at the beginning of a runover line
- in either part of an in-accord on the same braille line

Accidentals

Restate an accidental:

- at the beginning of a new line or parallel
- at the beginning of a new page or section
- after any major interruption
- where needed in an in-accord measure because accidentals marked on one side of an in-accord do not affect notes on the other side

Do not restate an accidental:

- for the same note at the same pitch within a measure unless included in the print (in-accords are an exception)
- for an inflected note tied across a bar line if both tied notes are in the same braille line
- in the continuation of a divided measure in a runover line if it would not have been required without the division.

Special symbols marked * or @ in Music Braille Code 1997

The following symbols must be listed on the Special Symbols page.

General table

Square bracket above the staff

Broken square bracket above the staff

Square bracket above the staff with unclear ending (facsimile copy)

Square bracket below the staff with unclear ending (facsimile copy)

Small brackets surrounding a single note or feature (facsimile copy)

Table 3. Clef signs

G clef

F clef

C clef

G clef on first line

F clef on third line

C clef on first line

G clef with little 8 above

G clef with little 8 below

Bass clef in the right-hand part

Treble clef in the left-hand part

Table 5. Accidentals and key signatures

¼ step alteration

¾ step alteration

Table 6. Specimen time or meter signatures

4 over a quarter note

3 over an eighth note

Table 12. The slur

Overlapping short slurs

Straight line from one staff to another

End of straight line between staves, if needed

Dotted-line slur or other unusual editorial slur marking

Slur that does not come from a note

Table 18. Nuances

⠈⠮	A reversed accent mark above or below a note
⠜⠉⠉	Arpeggio in downward direction
⠐⠜⠉⠉	Arpeggio in downward direction through two staves
⠘⠣⠂ ⠠⠣⠂	Accelerando within rhythmic group
⠠⠣⠂ ⠠⠣⠂	Steady rhythm within unusual rhythmic group
⠠⠣⠂ ⠘⠣⠂	Ritard within rhythmic group

Table 19. Music for wind instruments and percussion

⠣⠃	Cross for wind instruments
⠉	Circle for wind instruments

Table 20. Keyboard music

⠨⠜⠜	Right hand when intervals read up
⠸⠜⠜	Left hand when intervals read down

Table 21. Organ

⠈⠉	Crossing of foot in front
⠠⠉	Crossing of foot behind
⠘⠜ ⠸⠜	Start of passage where left hand and pedal parts are printed on the same staff (facsimile copy)
⠈⠜	Return of left hand alone on staff (facsimile copy)
⠉	Change without indication of toe or heel

Table 23. Music for string instruments

⠣⠇	Artificial harmonic (a diamond-shaped note)
⠜	End-of-barré sign when it is not followed by a fret sign

Table 24. Chord symbols for short-form scoring

⠴	Small triangle
⠴⠄	Small triangle bisected by line
⠨⠴⠛	Italicized 7 for a specialized 7th chord

Table 27. Figured Bass

⠴⠩⠉	Isolated accidental

Miscellaneous Procedures

Errors in the print

If an error in the print is a misspelled word or such obvious typographical mistake in a literary context, you should simply correct it in the braille. That rule is in *Braille Formats*. If any kind of error is encountered in the music, you should braille it as it is in the print, preceded by the music asterisk, and describe the error in a TN footnote. That rule is in MBC-97. In a text where errors occur frequently, a statement such as "Errors that appear in spelling, grammar, or punctuation are brailled as printed" may be given on the Transcriber's Notes page. The wording of the TN may be modified to fit the situation. Remember, though, that you are a transcriber, not an editor; only obvious errors such as too little or too much rhythmic value in a measure need to be noted.

Contents page

A table of contents is brailled only if there is one in the print. Generally, only the contents of a particular volume are shown for that volume. The complete contents is given only in the first volume.

Follow the rules of *Braille Formats*.

Special symbols page

There are three categories of music symbols that belong on the Special Symbols page: (1) those that are required by the code, (2) signs that we have made up or have adapted from their intended purpose to cover a slightly different need, and (3) symbols that we believe may not be familiar to a typical reader of the particular transcription. We have little or no choice about the signs in the first two categories. What to include in the third category is entirely a matter of the transcriber's good judgment.

Page 1 of *Music Braille Code 1997* opens with this statement: "The signs in these tables that are marked * (a change of sign) or @ (an addition to the music code) should be included on the Special Symbols page of each transcription." A summary checklist of those signs is printed in the Quick Reference Charts section of this handbook *(See* pages 17–18).

Some literary symbols, such as the accented letters in a foreign language, must be listed when they have been employed in the text of a song. *English Braille, American Edition, 1994*, requires that the dot-4 accented-letter sign be listed when it has been used. Literary signs, of course, are listed together, separately from the music signs. Incidentally, the music and literary prefixes that show switching between the two codes should be shown in the music section of the page because they are not included in the literary code.

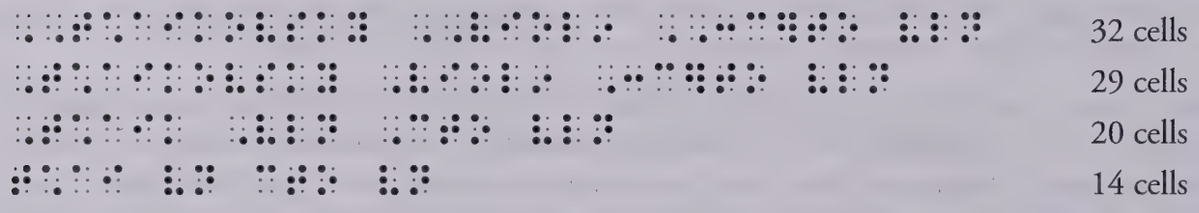
It is obvious that a symbol which you have had to invent because your score has some unique notation must be listed on the SS page. Sometimes, though, instead of devising a new symbol, it is convenient to use an existing sign in a context that is not specified in the code. For instance, vocal composers and arrangers frequently use effects that are like things that jazz performers do. Rising lines before and falling lines after notes are good examples. Those signs are found in the code under "Signs Peculiar to Jazz Music (Band or Orchestral Instruments)." It is helpful to a reader who regularly reads only vocal music to find them on the SS page when they are used in vocal music.

When it comes to guessing whether a reader of a particular transcription will appreciate finding a sign on the SS page or will be offended by your assumption of his ignorance, it is probably safer to try to be helpful than to make him hunt through a reference book. On the other hand, we should be careful not to promote ourselves from the role of transcriber to that of teacher. The transcriber is not expected to supply a glossary of signs that may be new to a child who is learning to read music that is designed for his grade level.

Running heads

The purpose of a running head is to identify the contents in case individual pages are spilled and to make certain that all pages are returned to the same book. Pick out words that will identify specifically: "SMITH SONATA" is not specific; "Smith Son. Op. 34" would be preferable. If separate parts of the same music have been placed in separate volumes, use the same running head but add an indication of the part.

It is very important to plan ahead and figure out the total number of cells the largest page numbers will take and use that as your guide when deciding what to use as the running head. Be careful to allow for three blank cells before and after the running head. The running head should be centered between the two pagination entries; it need not be located in the same cells on all pages. In general, shorten in the following order: (1) single-capitalize instead of double-cap, (2) eliminate unnecessary words, (3) abbreviate words. For example, the running head for the violin solo part of Piotr Tchaikovsky, *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* in D major, Opus 35 might successively be truncated as follows:



32 cells
29 cells
20 cells
14 cells

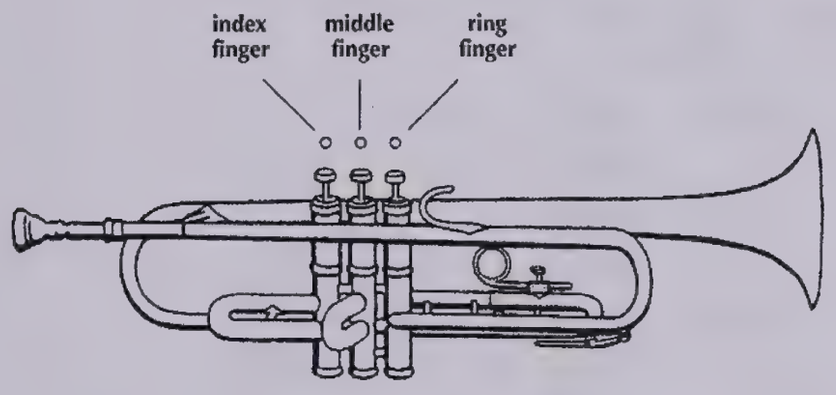
The 20-cell solution is probably a good choice in this case, because the print page numbers would occupy only up to 8 cells and the braille page number 3 cells, leaving 23 cells available.

Fingering Charts

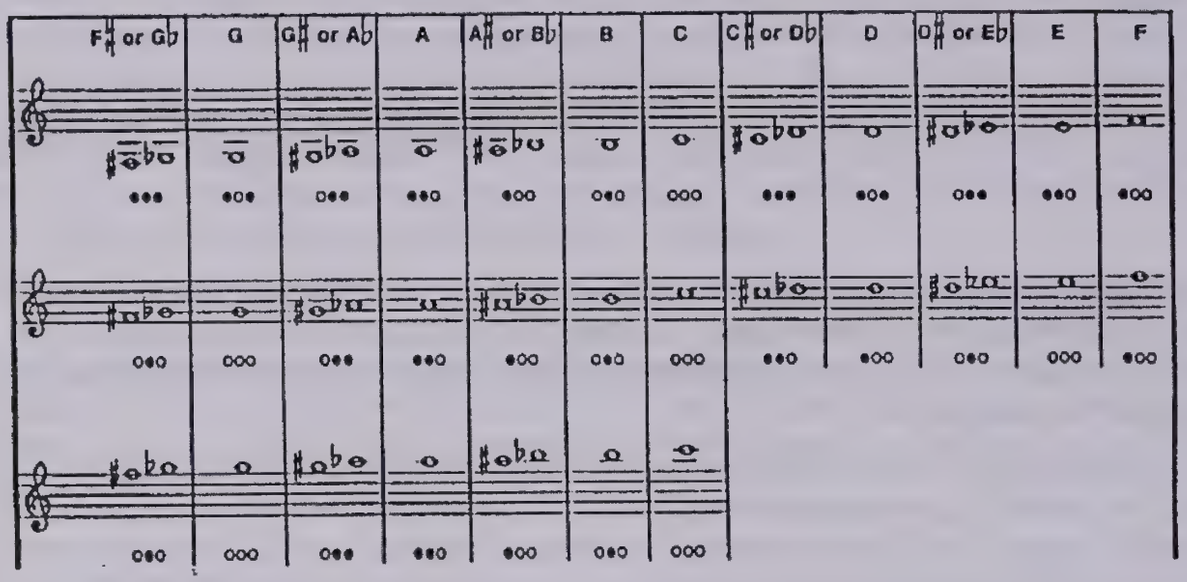
No format for fingering charts is given in the code. The goal is to provide all of the information in as simple a format as possible and to use conventional notation. Complex graph lines and drawings are not generally useful to the reader. The two examples following suggest possible solution ideas for widely differing types of print fingering charts.

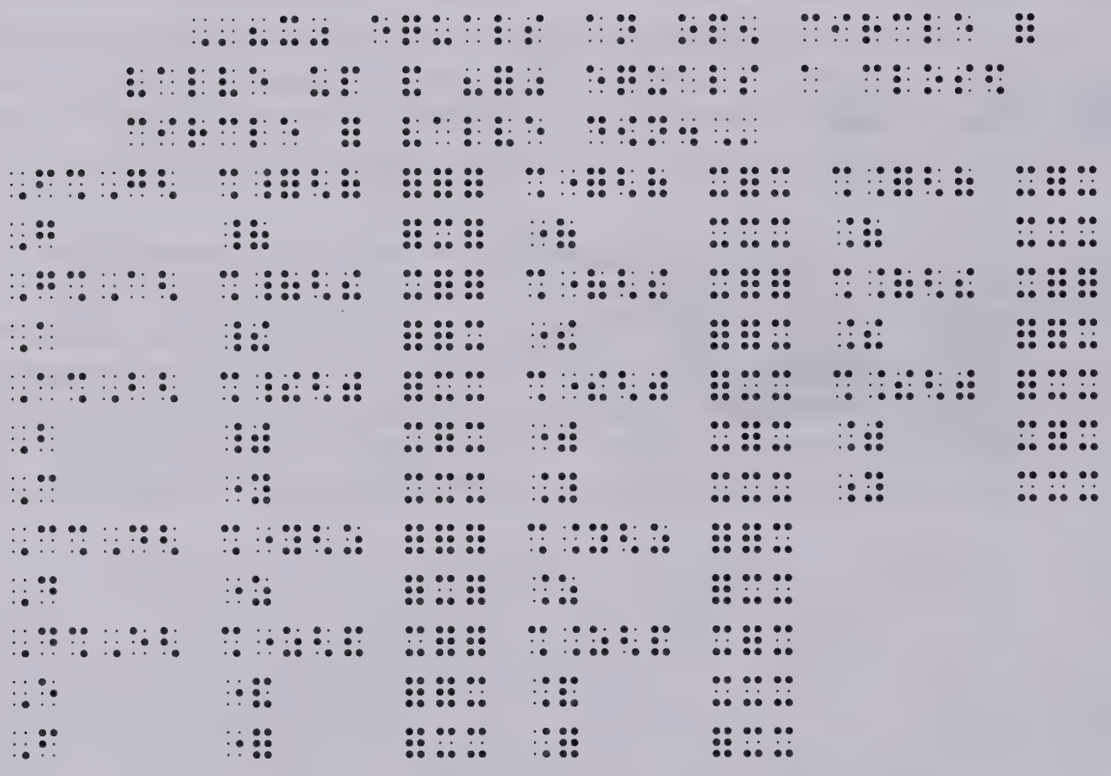
Example 1 is a simple trumpet fingering chart with closed and open circles representing depressed and released valves. The concise solution has note name, music note, and then three braille characters representing the closed or open circles. These are arranged in columns. The print chart has the notes arranged vertically in octaves, which suggests a similar horizontal compact presentation in the braille chart.

Example 1



○ valve up
● valve down


F♯ or G♭
G
G♯ or A♭
A
A♯ or B♭
B
C
C♯ or D♭
D
D♯ or E♭
E
F

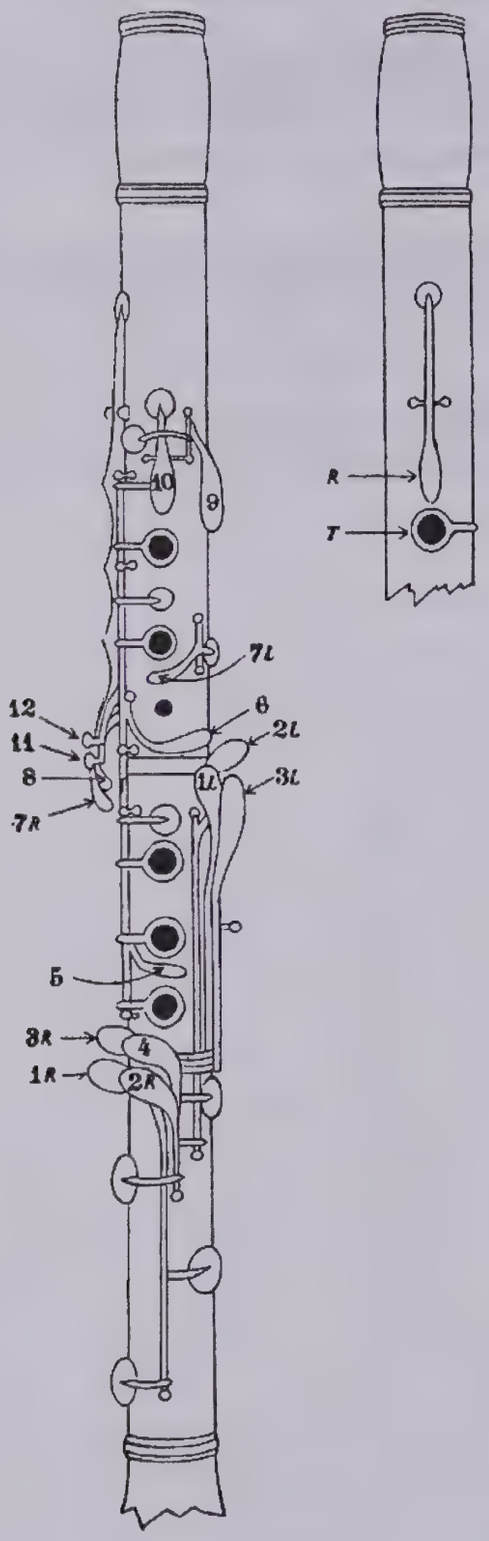


Example 2 is a very much more complex fingering chart with alternate fingerings shown for most notes. The names (numbers) of the keys are listed near the diagram. Instructions for "How to Read the Chart" are also printed near the diagram.

In the printed chart each fingering for each note is read vertically. The holes to be covered or uncovered are not given names but are shown by filled or open circles separated by a horizontal dash between the holes for the right hand and the left hand. Some of the key numbers are printed to the left of the columns of circles and others to the right.

In the braille chart the vertical fingerings are shown horizontally. The covered and uncovered holes are represented by the same signs as were used for the depressed or released valves in the chart for the trumpet and the horizontal line is represented by a slash. The key numbers printed above the horizontal dash are shown before the group of hole signs and those below the dash are shown after it, regardless of their vertical placement in the print. Because the only letters employed are T, R, and L, number and letter signs have been omitted to conserve space.

Example 2



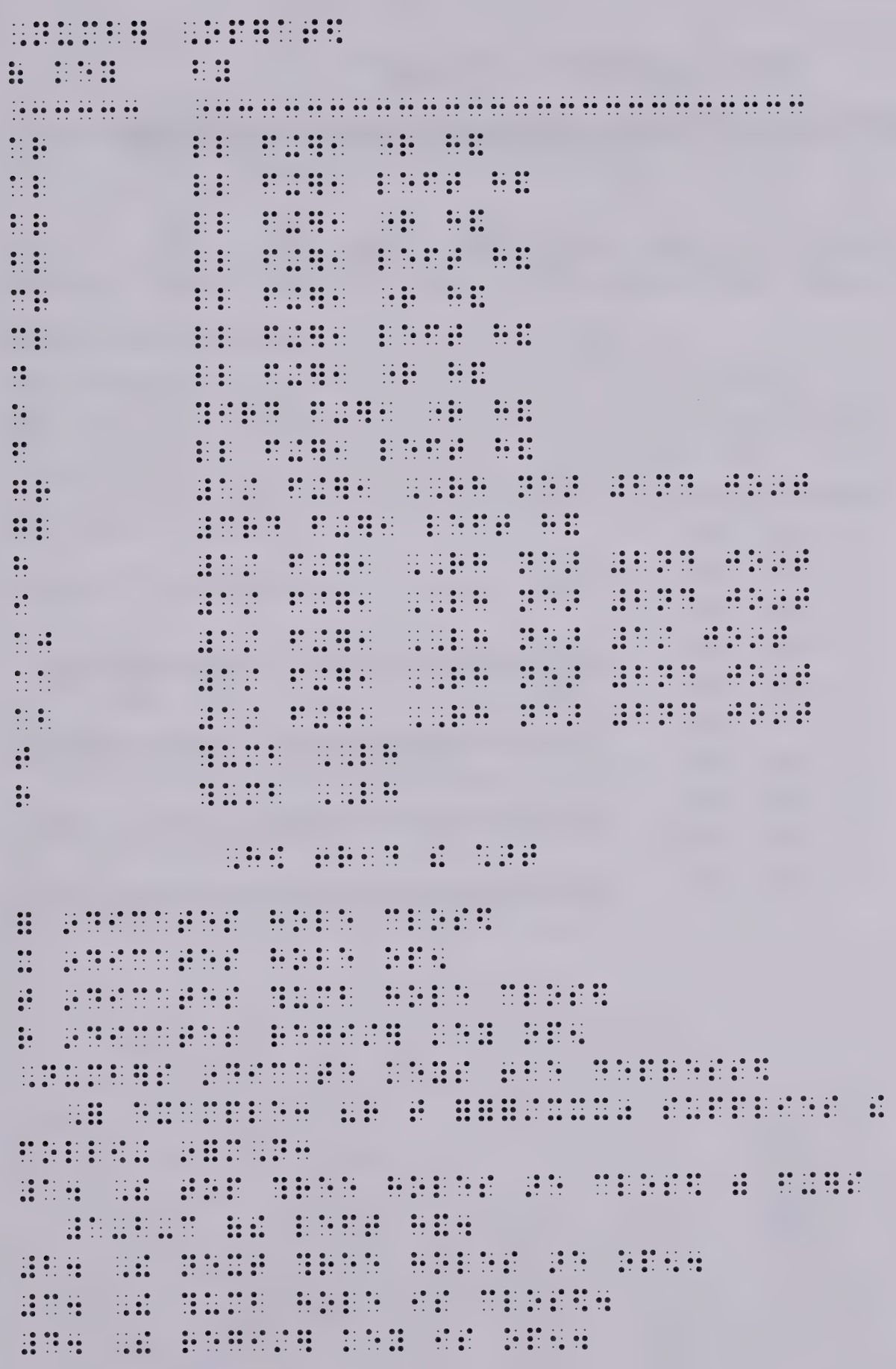
How to read the chart

• indicates hole closed
° indicates hole open
T indicates thumb hole closed
R indicates register key open
Numbers indicate keys to be depressed
For example:

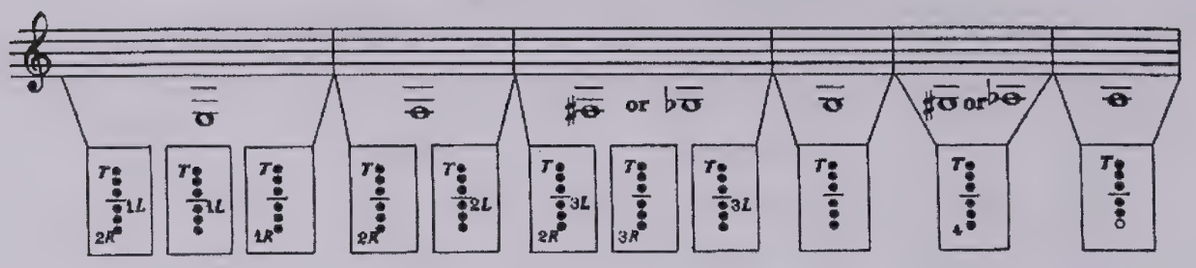
supplies the following information:

1. The top three holes are closed with fingers 1-2-3 of the left hand.
2. The next three holes are open.
3. The thumb hole is closed.
4. The register key is open

Number of key	Operated by
1R	little finger, right hand
1L	little finger, left hand
2R	little finger, right hand
2L	little finger, left hand
3R	little finger, right hand
3L	little finger, left hand
4	little finger, right hand
5	third finger, right hand
6	little finger, left hand
7R	1st finger, RH near 2nd joint
7L	3rd finger, left hand
8	1st finger, RH near 2nd joint
9	1st finger, LH near 2nd joint
10	1st finger, LH near 1st joint
11	1st finger, RH near 2nd joint
12	1st finger, RH near 2nd joint
T	thumb LH
R	thumb LH



FINGERING CHART



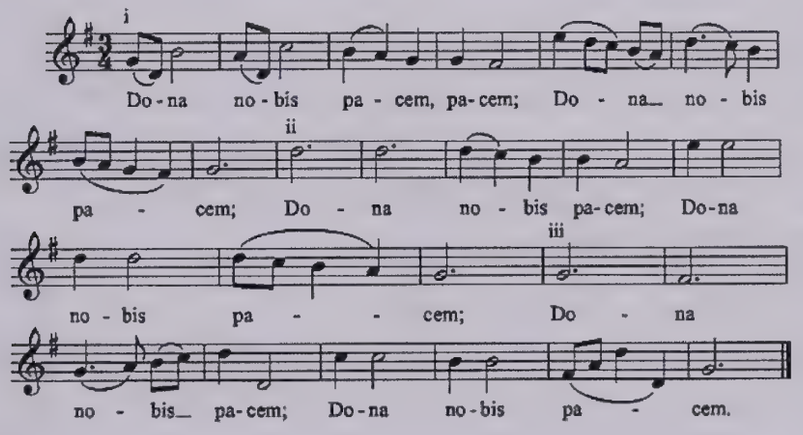
Format Adjustments for Special Circumstances

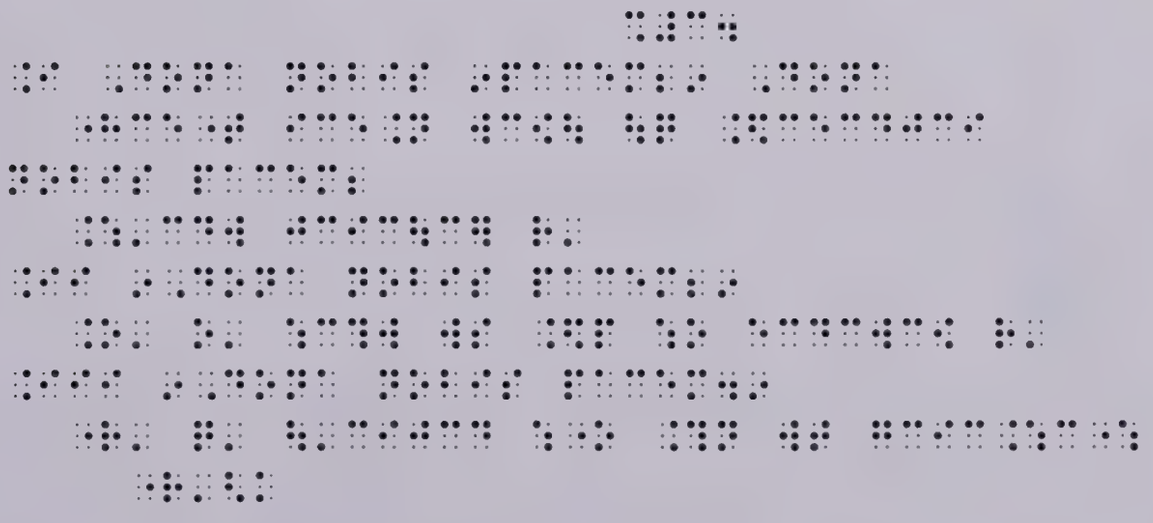
It is often necessary to contrive adaptations of the typical music braille formats in order to present a particular type of music in the clearest way possible. Two such kinds of adjustments are shown here.

Rounds and catches

There is no specific rule in the code about formatting a round that is printed in a single-line layout. A good adaptation that has been used in the past is to begin a new parallel at each of the marked entrance points. That way, the division is clear in both the word and music lines. The number can be brailled at the margin of the word line. To distinguish it from a measure number, it can be put between word signs, or it can be italicized. If the number is a roman numeral, as it is in Example 1, italics will make it clear that it is not part of the lyric.

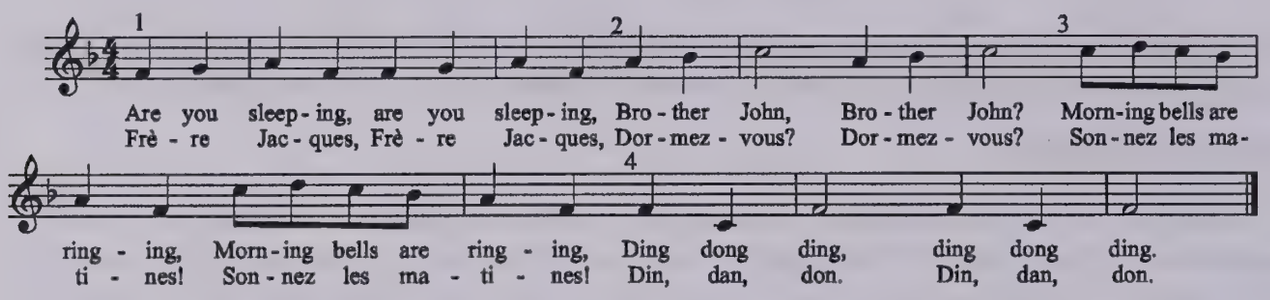
Example 1: "Dona Nobis Pacem," Traditional 16th Century.

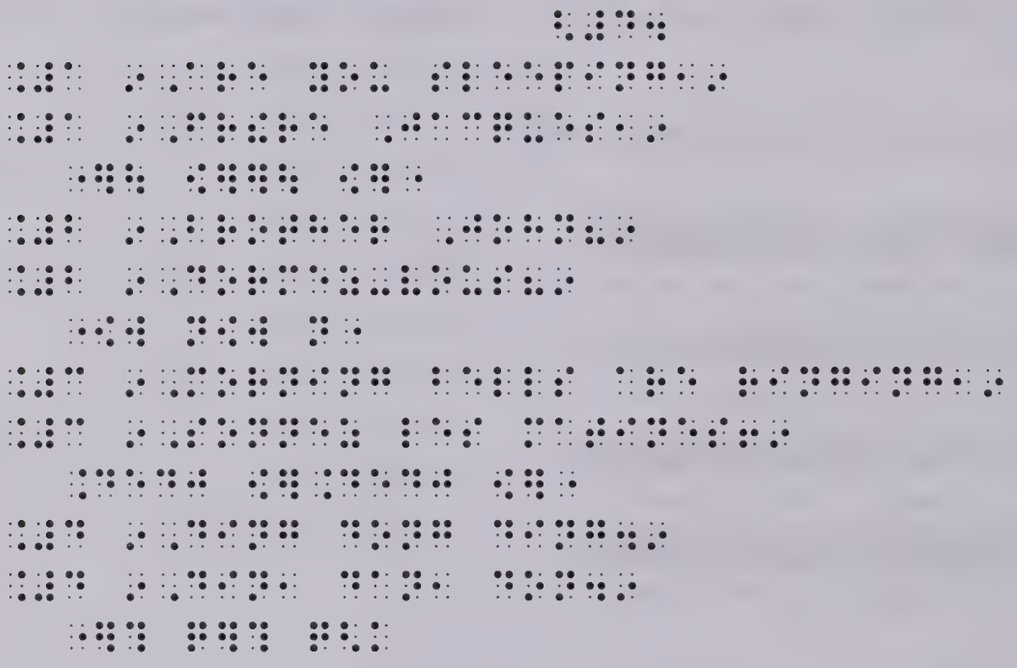




If the text is given in two languages, just as if the round were a solo song, you may transcribe the two sets of words in two successive braille lines, making sure that the syllables in both languages match with the notes of the one line of music. The markings for the entrances can be brailled at the margin in both word lines. The lyrics of the original language should be the ones positioned closest to the music.

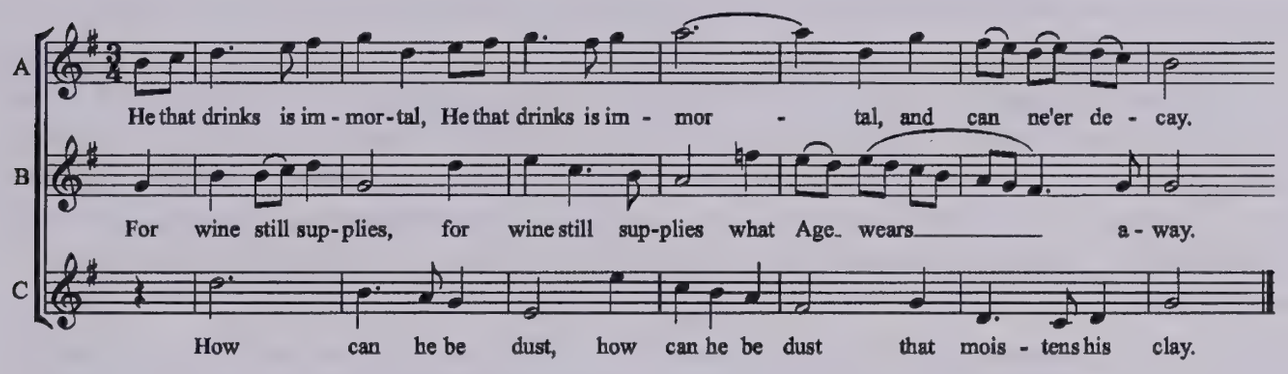
Example 2: "Frère Jacques," Traditional French.

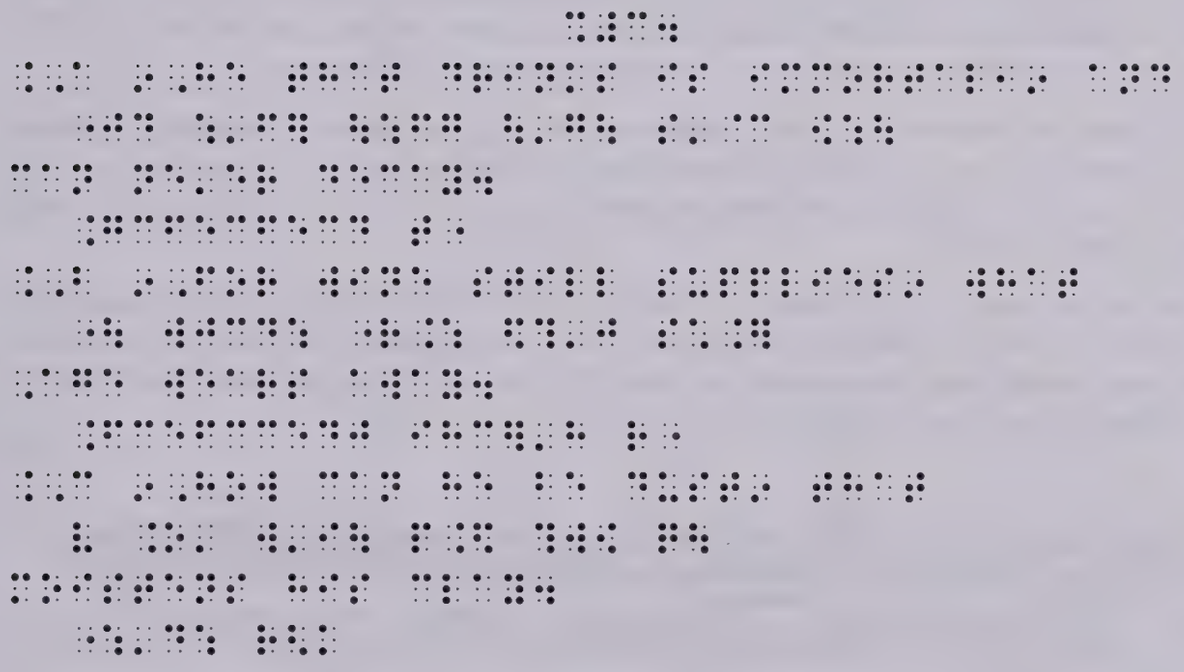




Catches are rounds. They were very popular in the Baroque period, especially in England. There were "Catch and Glee" singing clubs in many towns and villages, and many composers and poets wrote music to entertain them. The reason for printing the catches in open score is presumably to let the singer see what others are singing as he sings his own part. The blind singer does not need the spatial layout. He will have memorized the music; he will know, because of the numbers (or letters, in Example 3) at the starting points, what segments of the tune will coincide. It seems safe to transcribe a catch the same as any other round.

Example 3: "He That Drinks," Henry Purcell (1730)





Varied verses with chord symbols

The two verses of this song, printed together in a single staff, have different notes and rhythms in four measures. To transcribe the music, you may choose between two rules in *Music Braille Code 1997*. Section 24.15, with its reference back to Example 22.21.1, says that you can show the musical variations for the second verse as in-accords, and braille the words of the second verse at the end of the transcription. However, Section 24.15.2 says "If there are a number of word and melodic variations present, each verse is brailled separately, in the usual three-line parallel." What "number" means is not defined. Either rule could fit this example.

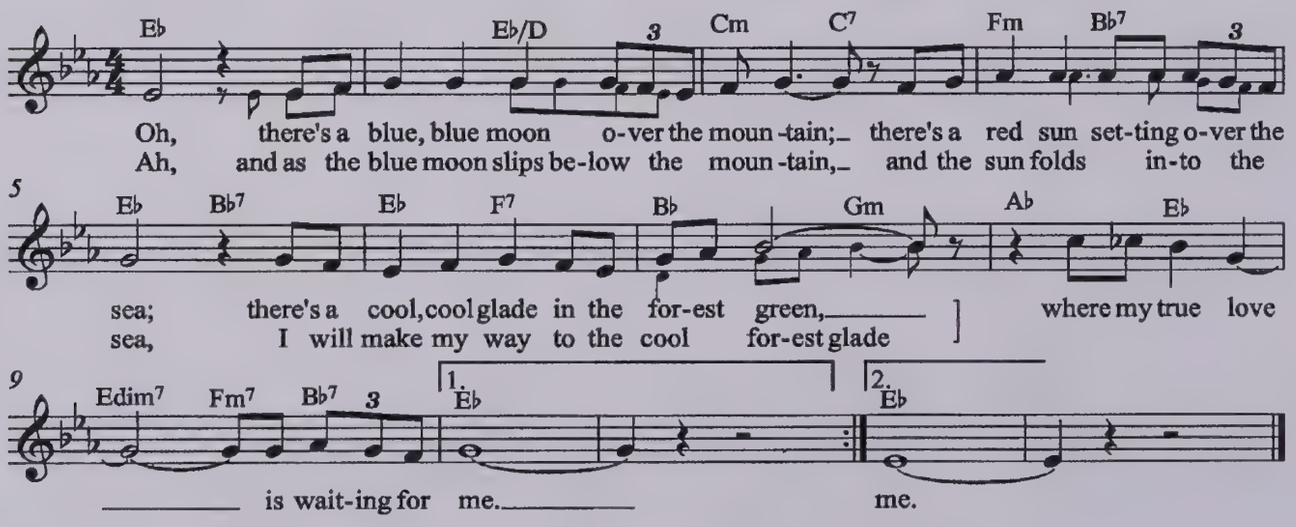
Faced with two or more ways to transcribe a given passage, it is a good idea to braille the alternative versions, then choose the best.

Solution A follows the approach of MBC–97 Section 24.15. The variations of time and pitch for the second verse are given in whole- or part-measure in-accords. Since the second in-accord part is always for the second verse, the transcriber decided that it was only necessary to indicate that fact in the first occurrence. The words and chords of the second verse are brailled at the very end of the song. The code does not provide for putting the second-verse words with their chord symbols any place other than at the end.

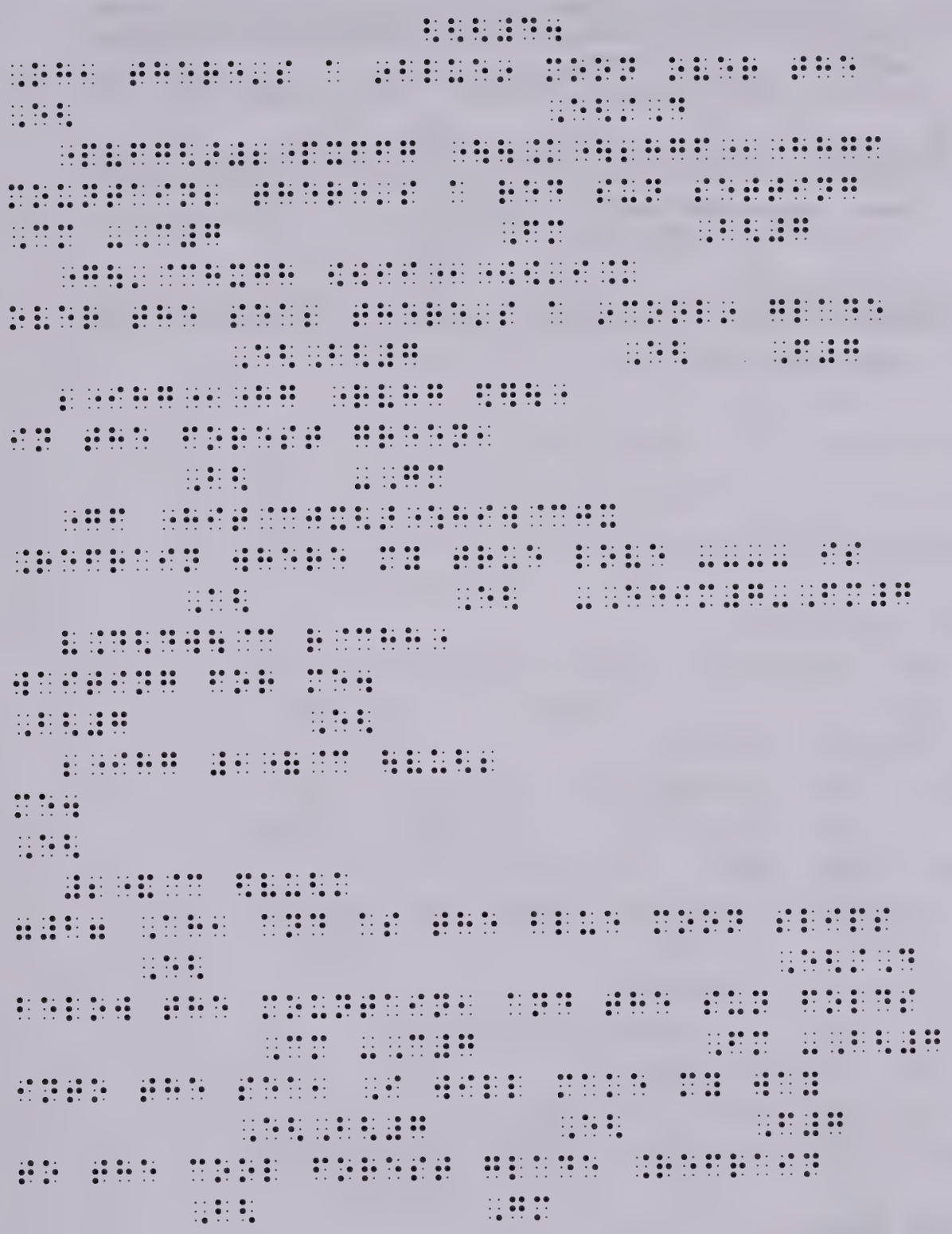
Solution B follows the approach of MBC–97 Section 24.15.2. This rule does not exactly specify how to braille the verses separately. In this solution, the entire repeated section is written out; a double bar is substituted for the repeat sign in the first ending. A transcriber's note explains how the braille differs from the print, in case a sighted accompanist in a rehearsal might refer to "the repeat."

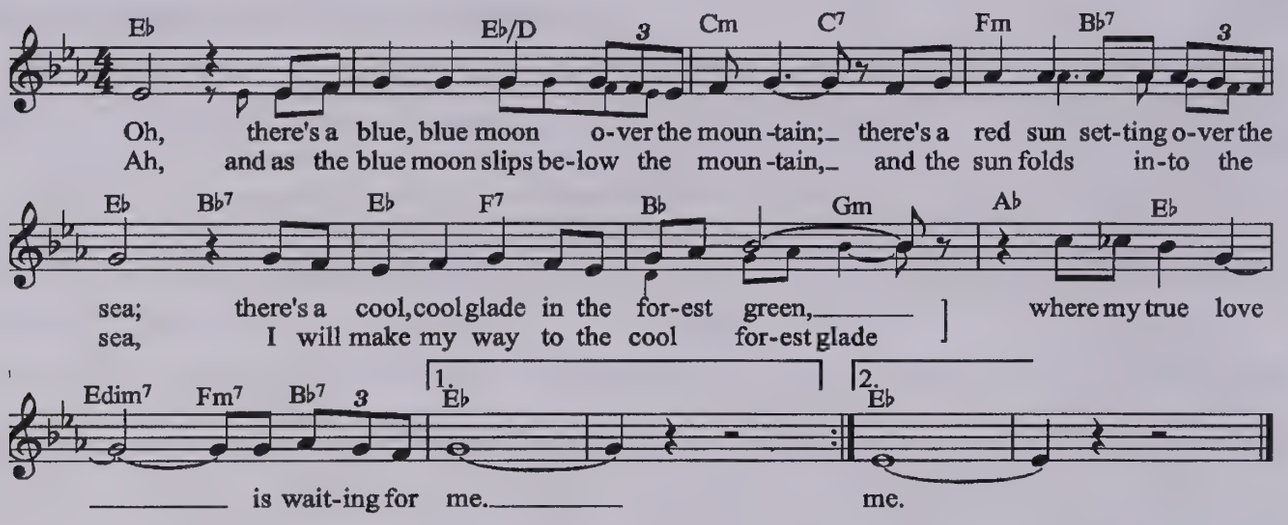
If you mentally adopt the fingers of the braille reader and follow the solutions character-by-character and line-by-line, Solution B seems preferable. Imagine encountering the music of the in-accord parts of the four variant measures in Solution A and having to search back and forth to the end of a multi-page score to find the matching words!

There is one rare circumstance in which Solution A should prevail in spite of the extra effort required to read it. That would be making a facsimile transcription for a blind teacher of sighted students, who would need to know exactly what the students are seeing. In this case, of course, there would also be added details such as the inclusion of clef signs.

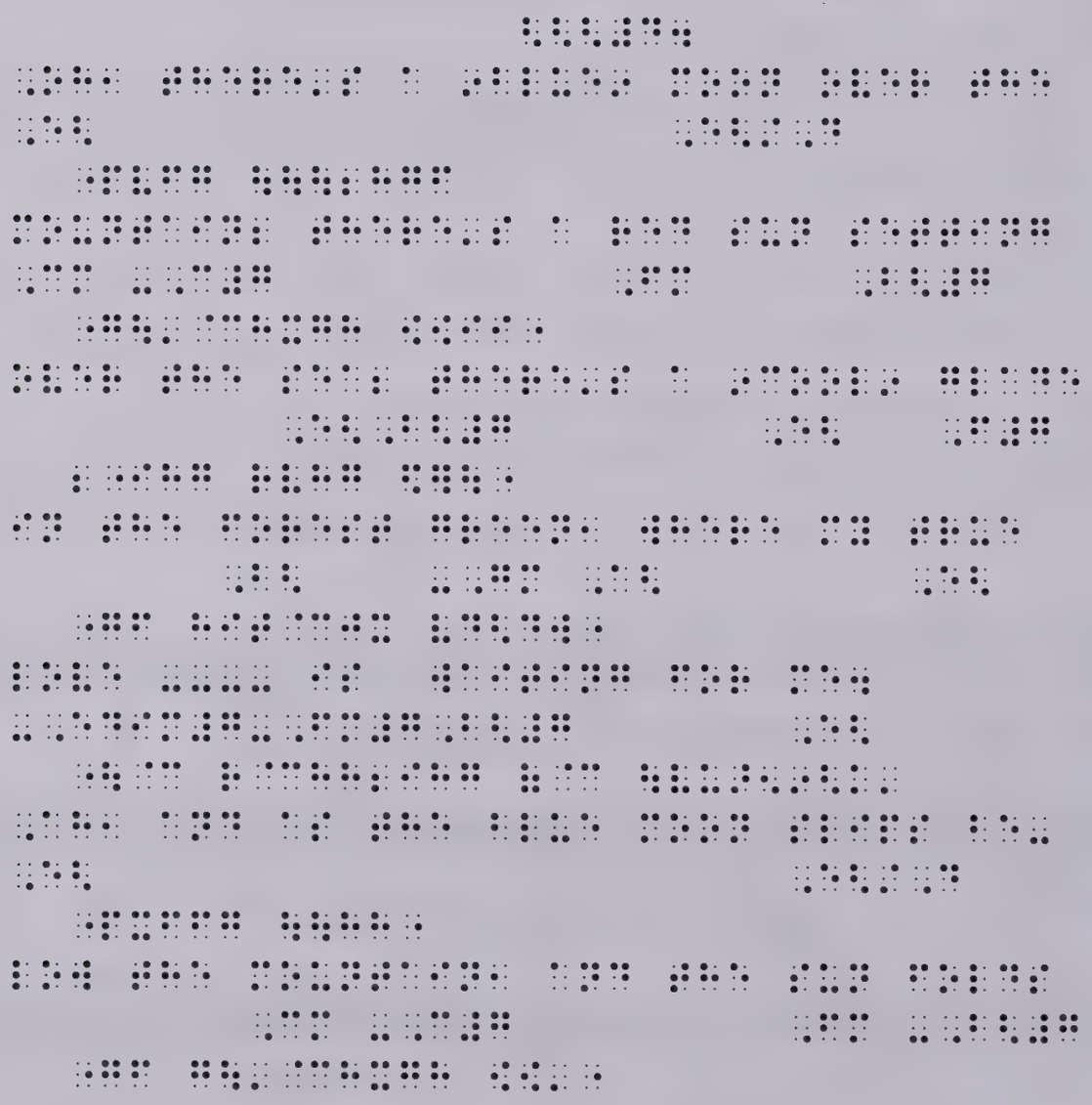


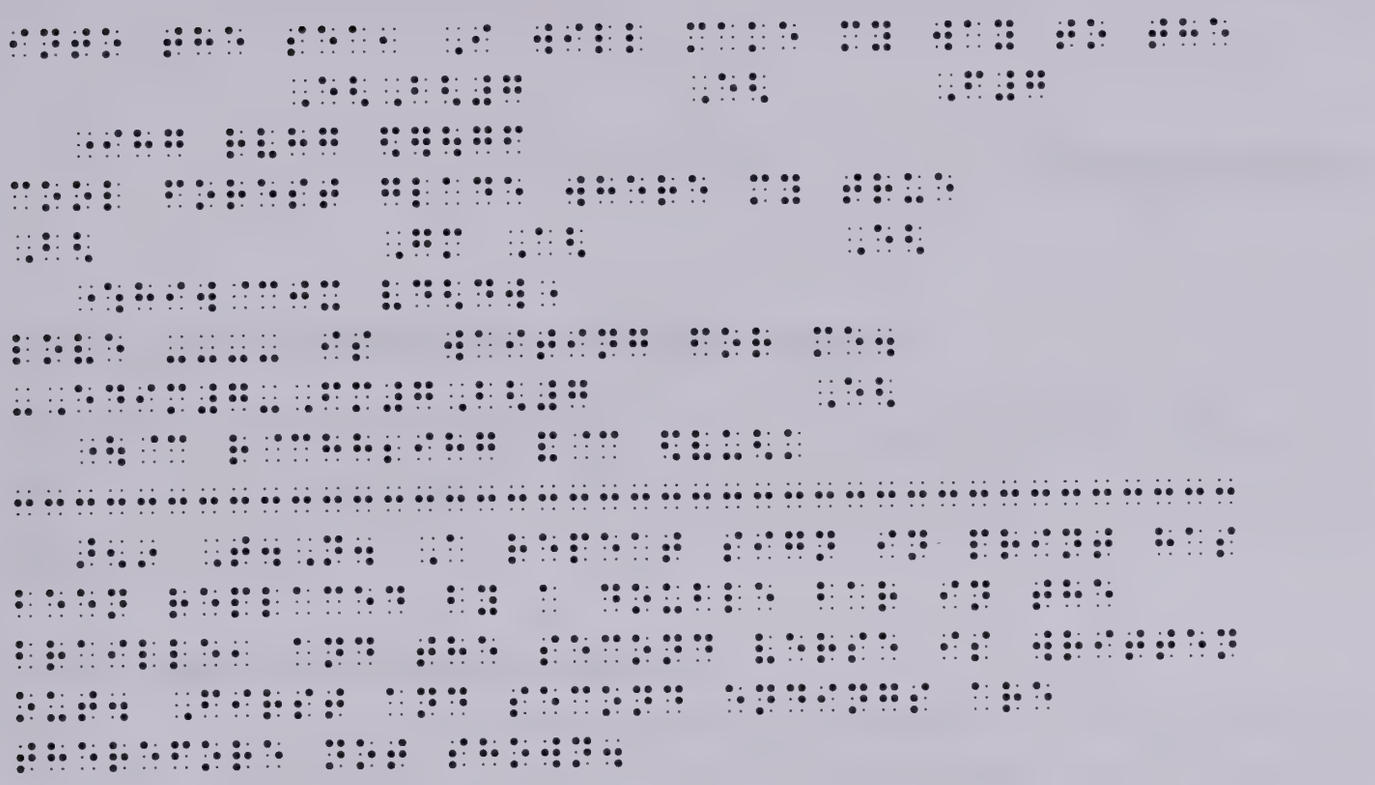
Solution A




E♭ E♭/D 3 Cm C7 Fm B♭7 3
Oh, there's a blue, blue moon o-ver the moun-tain;_ there's a red sun set-ting o-ver the
Ah, and as the blue moon slips be-low the moun-tain,_ and the sun folds in-to the
E♭ B♭7 E♭ F7 B♭ Gm A♭ E♭
sea; there's a cool, cool glade in the for-est green,_____ where my true love
sea, I will make my way to the cool for-est glade
Edim7 Fm7 B♭7 3 1. E♭ 2. E♭
_____ is wait-ing for me._____ me.

Solution B





Pagination

Braille page numbers across multiple volumes

Pages usually are numbered consecutively until a part is complete. For instance, there may be two volumes of a voice part and three volumes of piano accompaniment all from the same book. Number the pages of the vocal volumes consecutively and then begin the first piano volume, in this case volume three, with braille page one. If two or more parts are in the same volume, pages are numbered consecutively until the end of the volume.

Print pages that are not consecutive

In the print page numbers at the top left corner of the page, braille the exact numbers of the included print pages in the order in which they appear in the braille. It is not necessary to restate the pagination sign for each number and it is not necessary to separate the numbers with commas. A typical example might be:

pages 5-7 and pages 4-5

or, if there is a forward jump:

pages 5-7 and page 18

Print page turn within a literary passage

When you are not using textbook pagination in the transcription, insert the music pagination sign precisely where a page turn occurs, even if it should fall in the middle of a divided word. For example:

OR

Parts Extracted from a Score

Single-line parts for individual singers and instrumentalists, both school children and adults, may be the most often-needed kinds of transcriptions. Frequently, the single-line parts that a musician needs have not been printed separately, and the transcriber must do the separating from a printed score. Treat the parts as if they were solos. The following examples represent these kinds of requests. (The title and other preliminary pages have not been shown in the illustrations, but of course they must be included in the "real" transcription.)

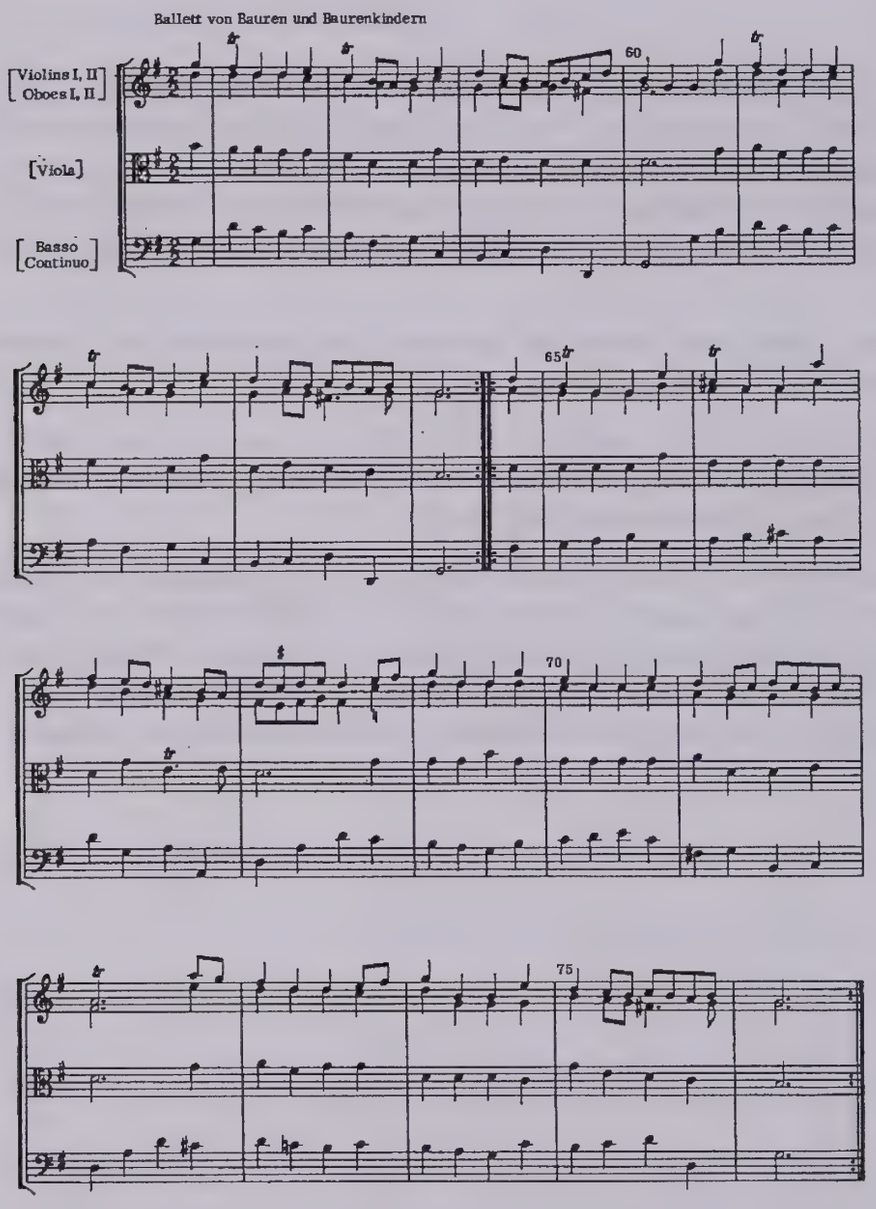
In Example 1, the two violin parts and the viola part are to be transcribed for a violinist who has been asked to be ready to play any of the three parts.

If the two violin parts were in unison except for a very few measures, you could braille them together, using in-accords. In this case, however, the parts are rarely in unison even for a whole measure, so they should be brailled as if they had been printed separately.

Ordinarily, it is necessary to transcribe each of the parts separately, complete with separate title and preliminary pages. However, if you expect the transcription to be solely for the use of an individual musician, there seems to be no need to make a separate volume for each part. Where you would ordinarily show the instrument's name on the title page you could write "Violins 1 and 2, Viola," then above the music heading for each part you could center the name of the individual part, followed by a blank line.

Example 1

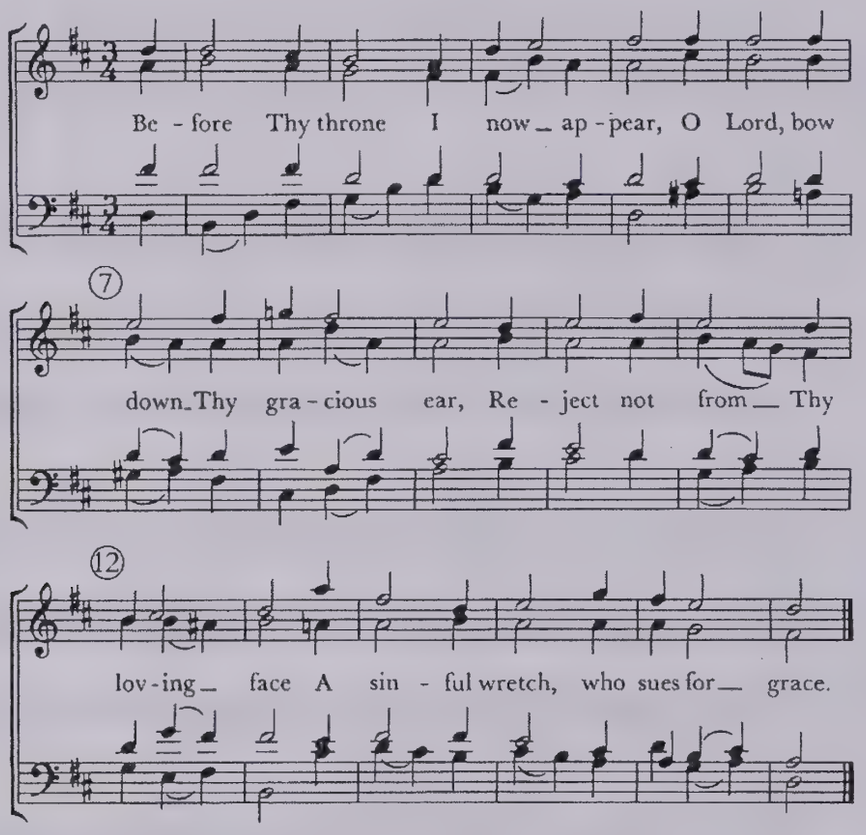
Croesus
Reinhard Keiser
(1674-1739)

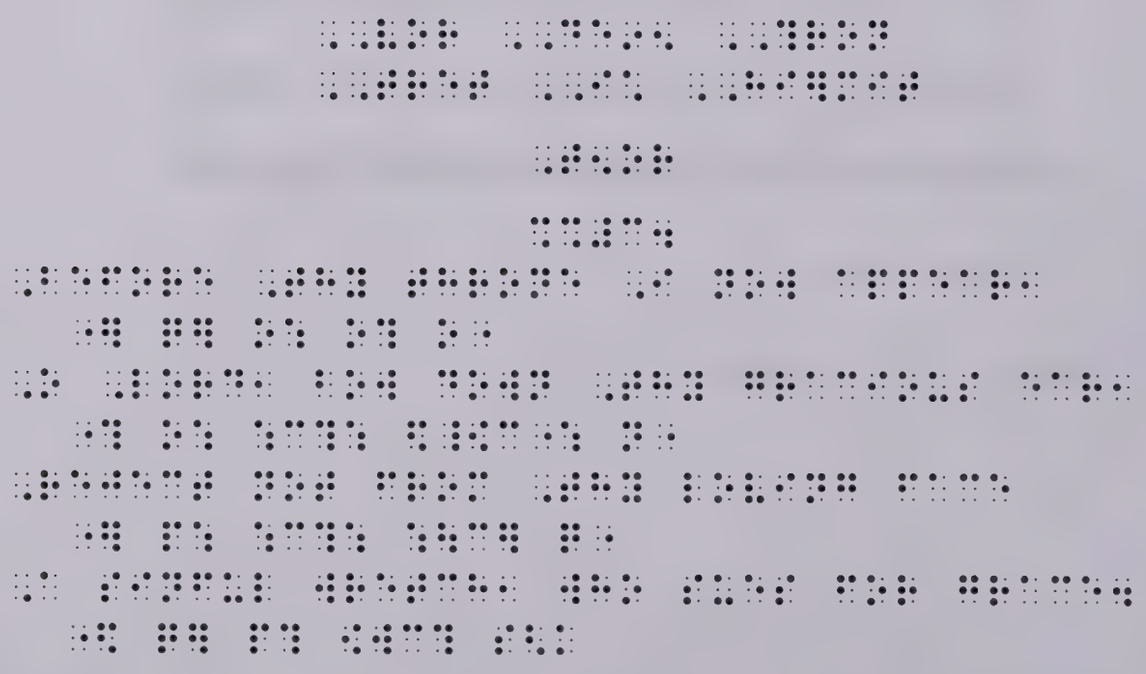


In Example 2 only the tenor voice part is to be transcribed. The only notational challenge is in the next-to-last measure where the directions of the stems of the bass-clef parts are reversed. It is clear that the reversal of the stems shows that the tenor is to sing below the bass in the first beat of the measure. It would not be incorrect to show measure numbers at the margins of the word lines of some of the braille parallels. None are included in this transcription.

Example 2

Vor Deinen Thron Tret Ich Hiermit
J. S. Bach



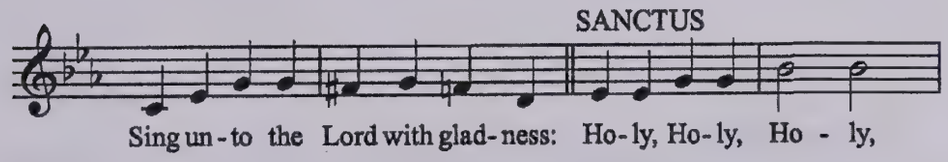


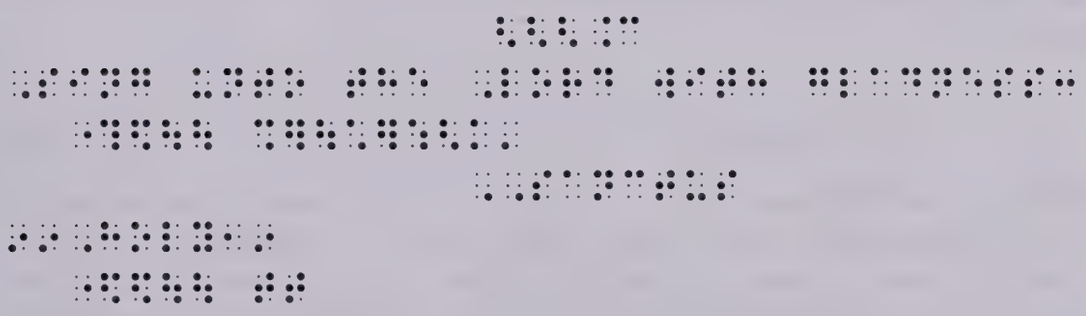
Section Titles

A subtitle that appears over the staff in the progress of a composition may be brailled on a free line above the segment or parallel, following print as to capitalization and punctuation. The subtitle should be spaced the same as a tempo indication, centered in single-line or line-by-line format, or starting in the second cell after the hand sign in bar-over-bar format.

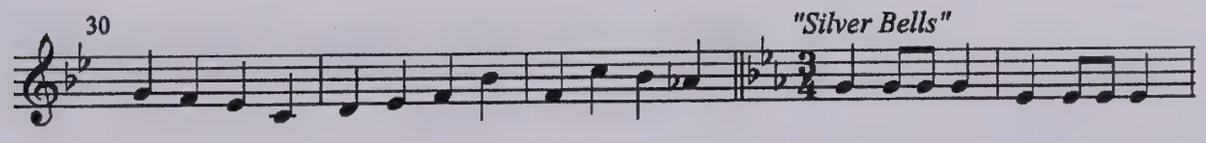
If a subtitle and a tempo change and/or new signature occur together, the subtitle should occupy the line above the music heading, regardless of its position in the print. A subtitle that is not an indication of mood or tempo should not be combined with a signature to form a music heading; if a subtitle and a change of signature coincide, they should occupy separate braille lines. The subtitle should also be brailled above a rehearsal mark.

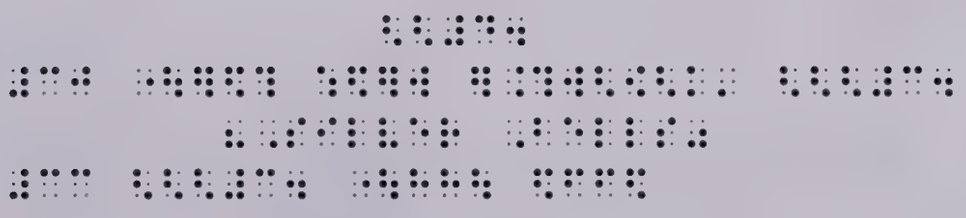
Example 1



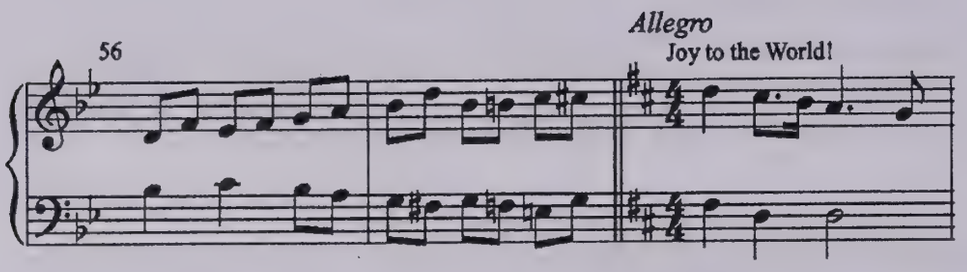


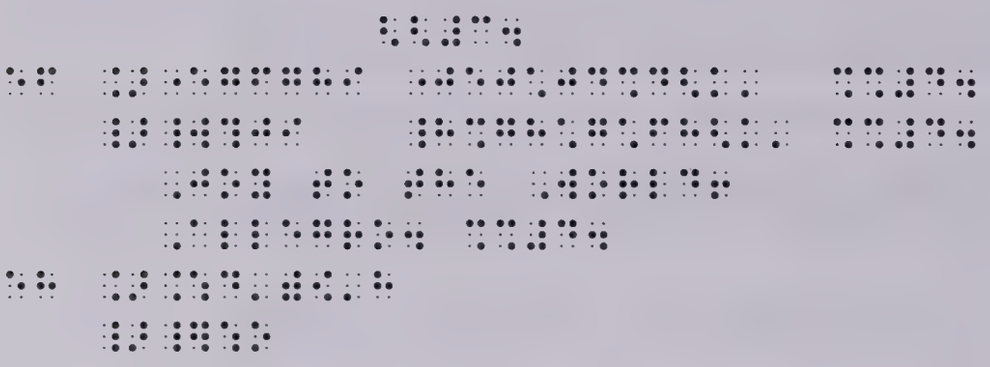
Example 2



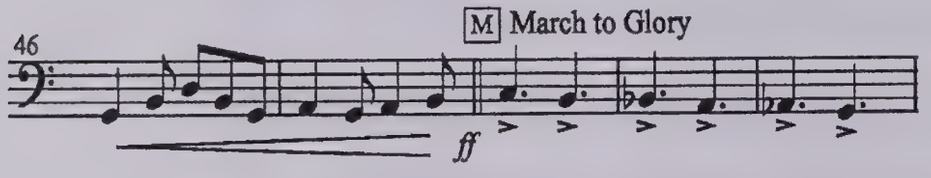


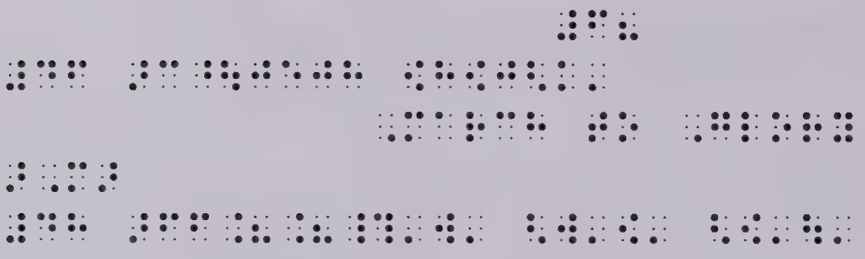
Example 3





Example 4





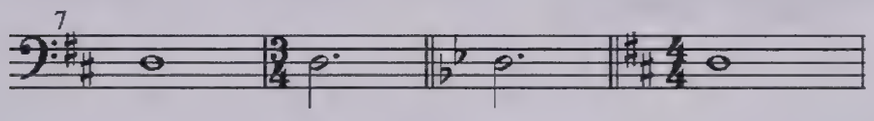
Signature and Tempo Changes

Showing a key or meter change or a new tempo indication that occurs singly is a well-established procedure. When such changes occur in combinations, the transcriber may have choices to make. The braille presentation may depend on which method is being used. The procedure is the same in single-line format and in vocal music's line-by-line format, since both methods include only one music line in a system. Bar-over-bar format differs in some details.

The initial time signatures have been omitted in the print because all of the examples are supposedly extracted from the middles of scores. The time signatures have been supplied in the music headings in the braille.

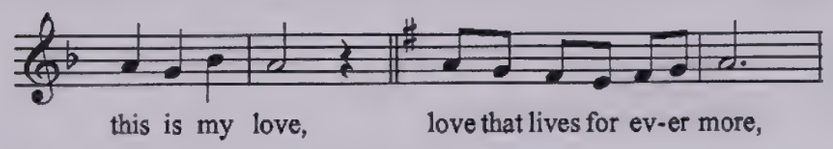
In single-line or line-by-line format, a change of key or time signature, or both together, is brailled into the music line between measures, set off by spaces. Normally in print, a key change is associated with a light double bar, while a time change does not usually require one. In any case the braille should follow the print. When the two signatures change together, they are combined in the braille, key followed by time, as they would be in a music heading.

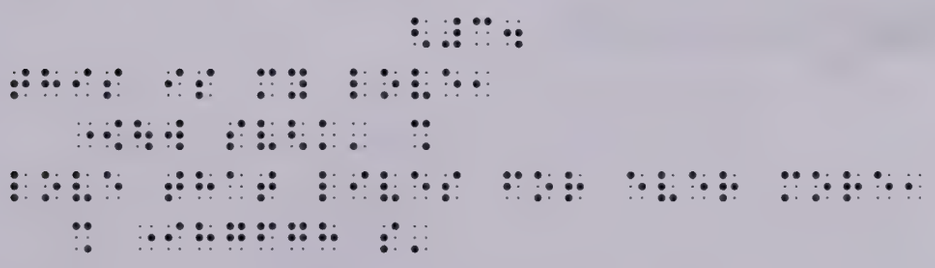
Example 1



If a new segment is started where there is a change of signature, the new signature should be given as the first element in the segment. If there is room on the last line of the preceding segment, the new signature should also be shown there as a warning. If there is not room, however, the "heads-up" extra signature may be omitted. It is not necessary to introduce an additional braille line just to display the warning.

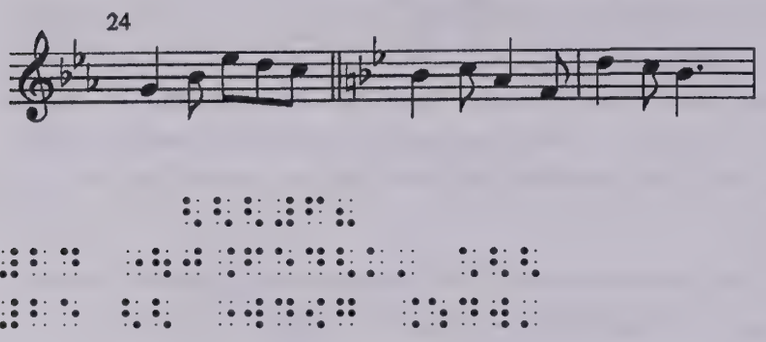
Example 2





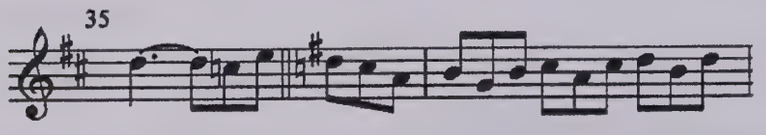
Sometimes a new key signature will have been printed with a cancellation (natural signs) of the old signature. The cancellation should be included in the braille if it is present in the print. If this new signature is given as a "heads-up" at the end of a segment and then restated at the beginning of a new segment, the natural signs need not be included in the restatement.

Example 3



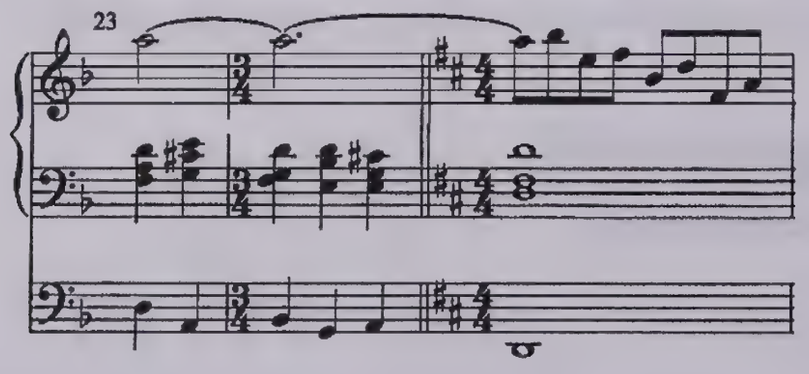
If a new key signature occurs within a measure, the measure must be interrupted by a music hyphen and continued following the key change. A meter change within a measure, of course, is an improbability.

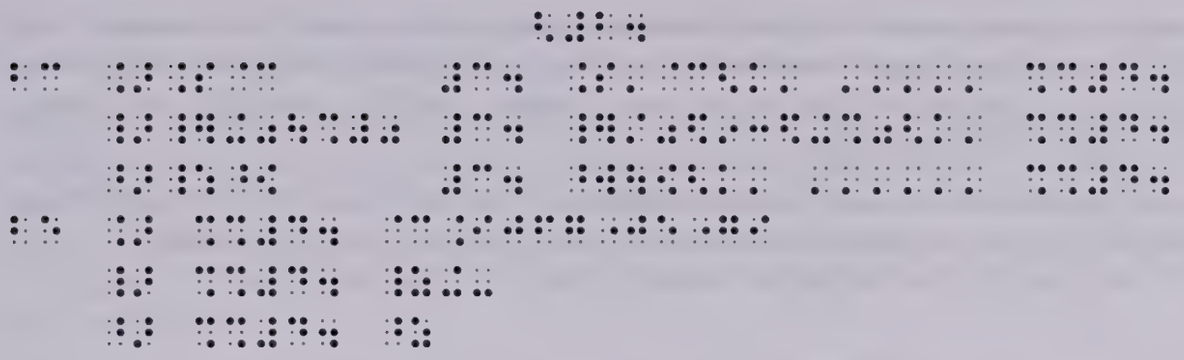
Example 4



In bar-over-bar format, the new signature must be shown in each line of the parallel, and the signatures should be aligned vertically.

Example 5

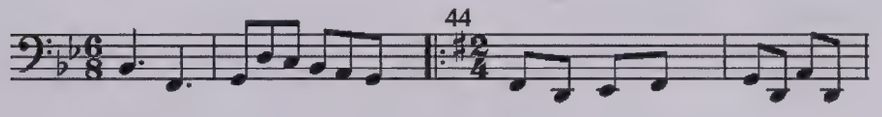


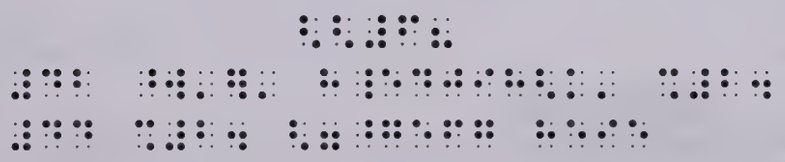


If a new signature coincides with a print forward-repeat sign, it is brailled in the space before the measure, as it would be if the repeat were not there. The two markings take effect simultaneously, even though the signature may be printed physically following the repeat sign. The repeat sign almost always calls for starting a new segment or parallel, so the presence of the signature at the beginning of the segment will not be easily overlooked.

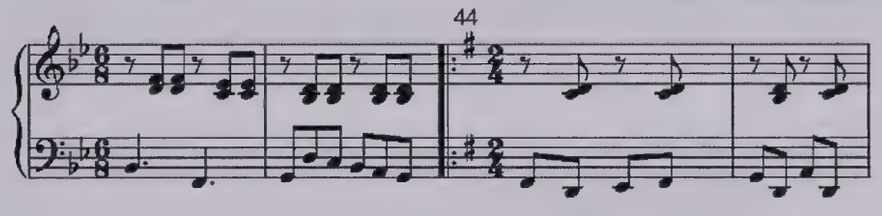
In these two examples, a double bar is assumed to conclude the preceding measure not because of the repeat sign itself but because the key signature changes. A time signature change alone would not necessarily imply a double bar, although it would not be incorrect to provide one in the braille.

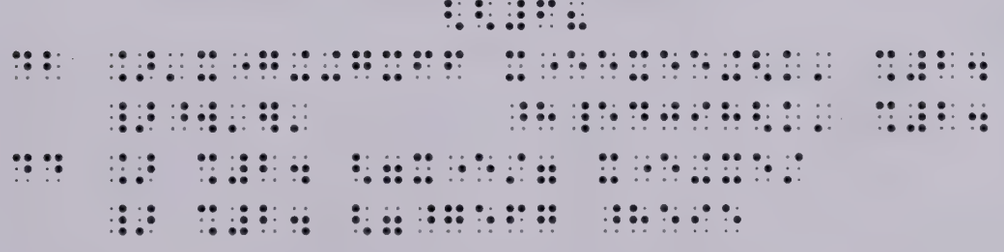
Example 6





Example 7

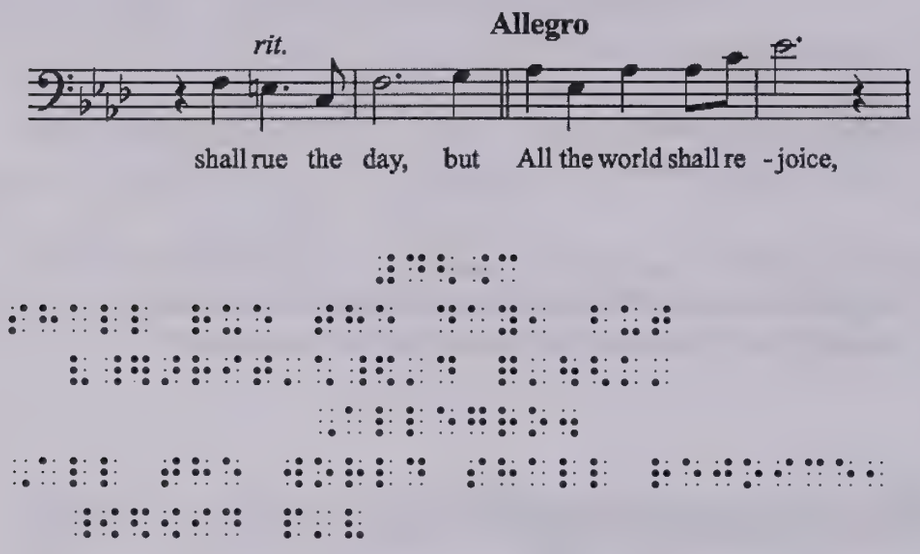




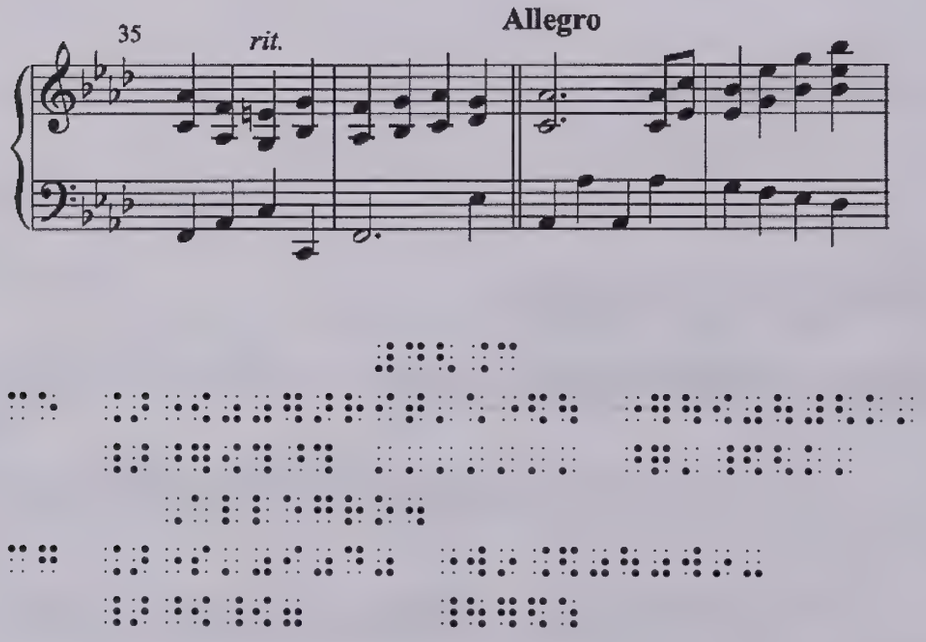
When a new tempo indication is introduced but there is no change of key or time, it is given in a free line, capitalized following the print, and terminated by a literary period. No blank lines are left. Sometimes the transcriber must make an arbitrary decision as to whether a marking constitutes a new tempo or mood, or is merely a word-sign expression.

In single-line or line-by-line format, the indication is centered in the free line. In bar-over-bar format, however, the new indication is positioned, in its free line, two cells to the right of the hand sign.

Example 8



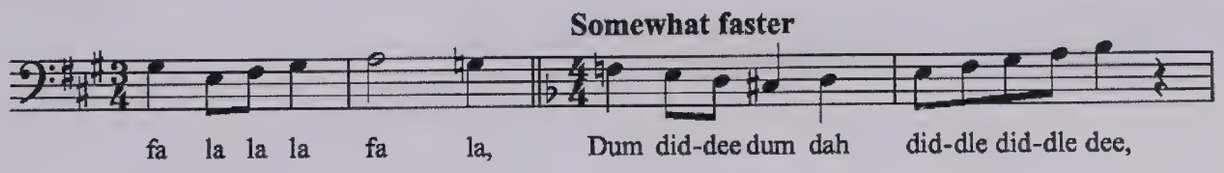
Example 9

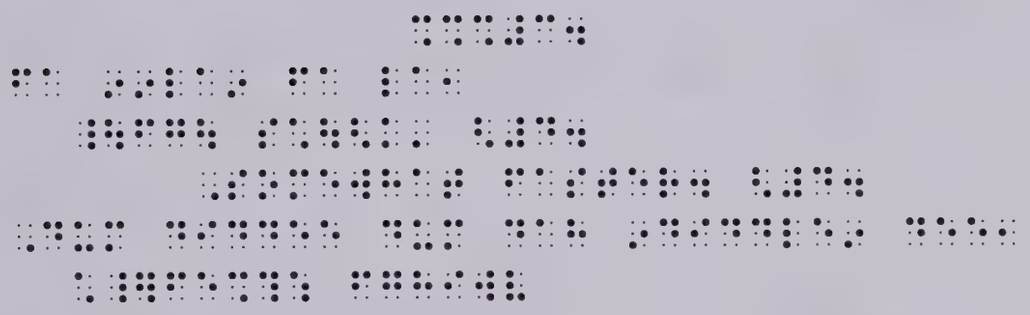


If all three elements change simultaneously, the combination is likewise centered in single-line or line-by-line format but placed two cells after the hand sign in bar-over-bar format.

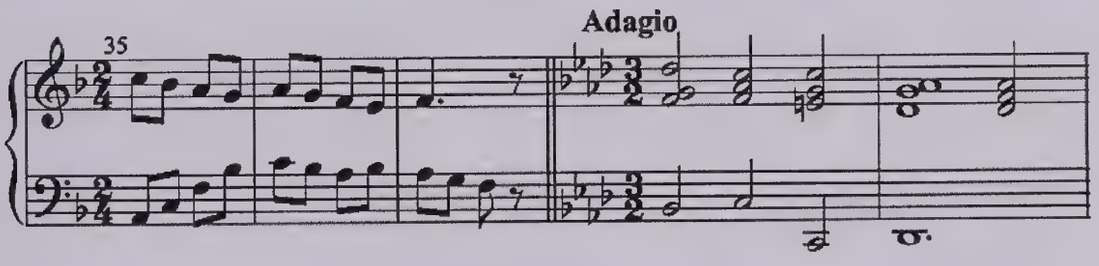
When such a complete new heading is employed, it is not necessary to restate the signature at the beginning of the new segment or parallel. It may be helpful for the reader to show the change at the end of the preceding segment or parallel if there is room, but it is not absolutely necessary. However, all similar instances in the transcription should be given the same treatment. If the "heads-up" signature is shown in one place, it should be included in all similar places; it would be better to omit it in all instances than to be inconsistent.

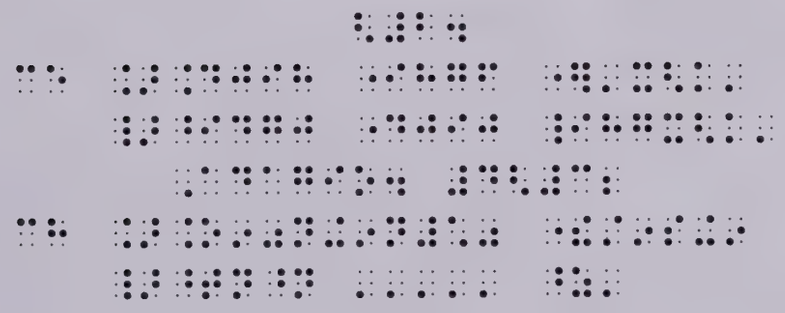
Example 10





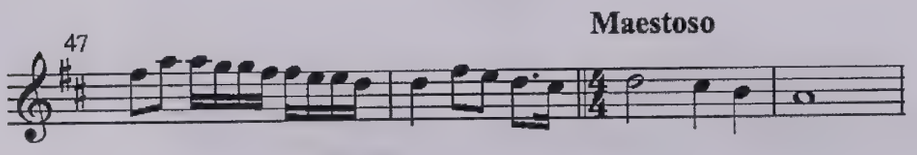
Example 11



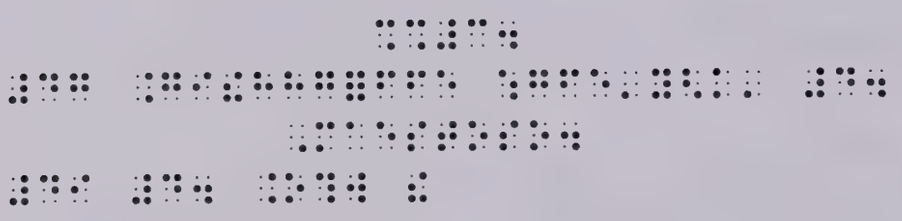


When there is a new tempo marking and a change of the key or of the meter, but the other element does not change, is it better to treat the tempo change and the signature change separately? (1) The signature change could be shown within the music line(s) and only the tempo indication placed in the free line. Otherwise, (2) only the signature that changes could be given in the free line along with the new tempo. Else, (3) the signature that does not change could also be included in the combination, resulting in a complete music heading. Example 10 shows the three alternative presentations for the same passage in single-line format. Example 11 shows the three options in bar-over-bar format.

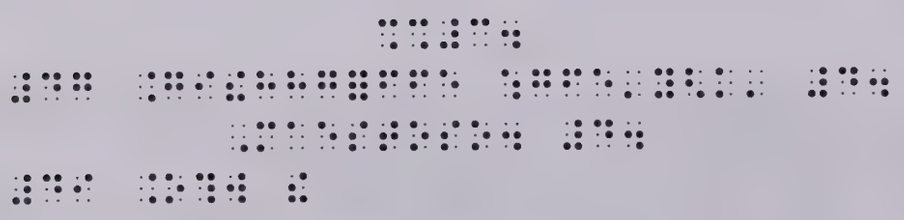
Example 12



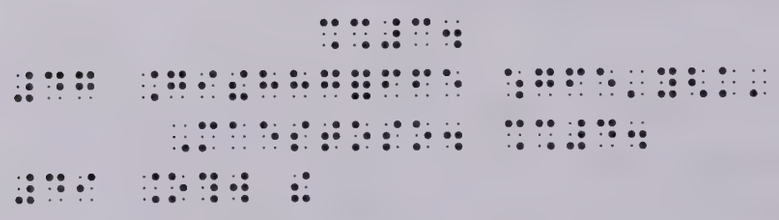
Solution 1



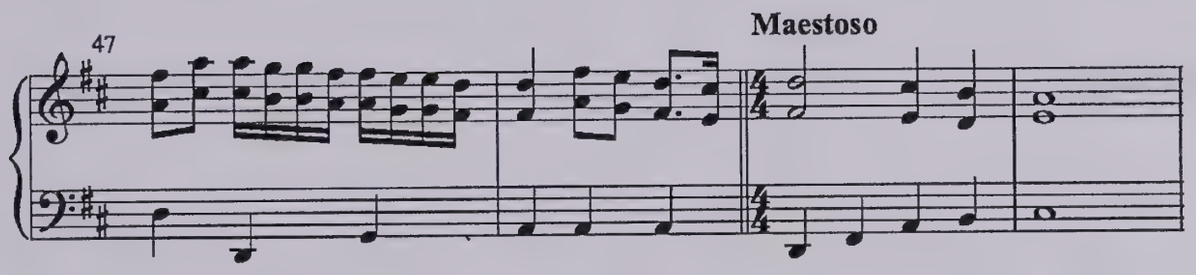
Solution 2



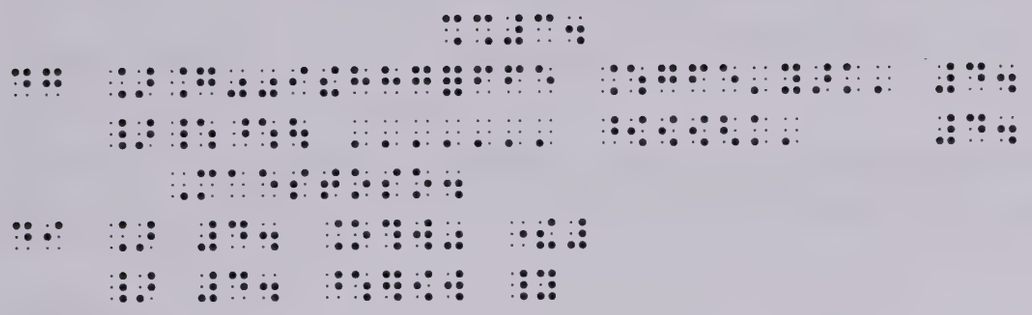
Solution 3



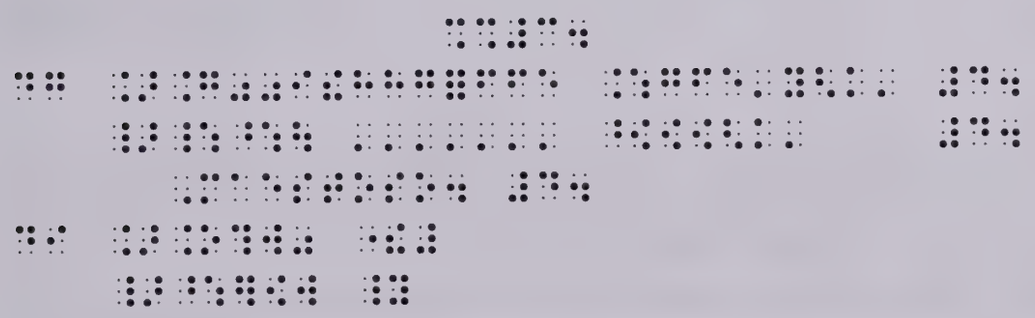
Example 13



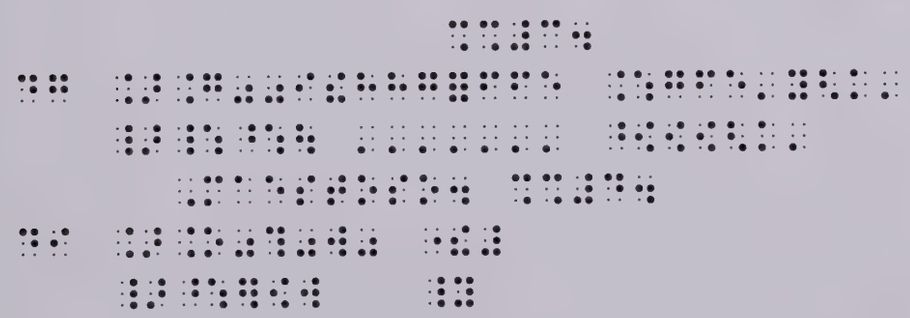
Solution 1



Solution 2



Solution 3



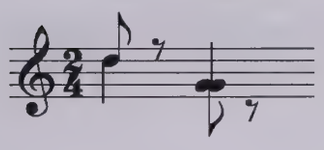
Stem Signs

Stem signs are needed only infrequently, and then almost entirely in music for keyboards or guitars and lutes. The music braille code devotes only a single page to them (paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 on page 89). However, when they are needed, they are indispensable.

A stem sign is a two-cell sign, brailled after an actual note, that tells the reader that a single print note is shown with two rhythmic values, or that one note is printed twice, one superimposed over the other. The term "stem sign" itself must be baffling to many braille readers, if they have not needed to learn about the details of print notation.

A stem sign is used in certain circumstances to show (1) two stems that are attached to the same note, or (2) two notes of the same pitch that are printed very closely together, with opposing stems, intended to be struck together, as:

Example 1



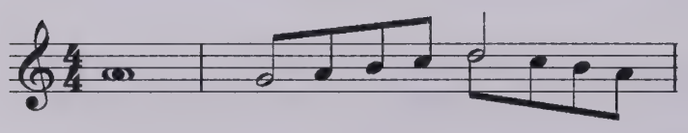
The stem sign shows only a rhythmic value, since the pitch has already been given in the note. If the values of the note are different, the greater of the two is the one shown as a stem sign. If the values agree, the stem sign, of course, shows the same value as that of the note.

The first cells of all the stem signs are the same, the stem sign prefix (456). The stem signs for the various note values are:

Whole	Half	Quarter	Eighth	Sixteenth	Thirty-second
⠸⠄	⠸⠅	⠸⠁	⠸⠃	⠸⠇	⠸⠂

In print, the two stems are always implied, but sometimes they may not actually appear. Whole notes in print do not have stems, so they may be printed joined or overlapped. Sometimes, a hollow note (half note) may be printed in a passage of solid notes (eighths, for instance) with or without adding a second stem.

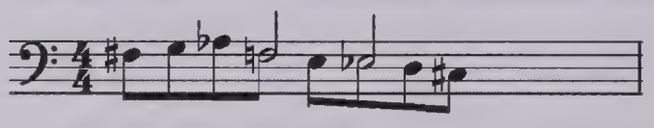
Example 2



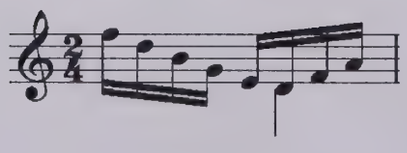
The code seems to consider the use of stem signs as a last-choice procedure. It is only necessary when the same musical result cannot be conveyed as well or better by means of the more standard in-accord, or when the stem sign device seems simpler or more direct. For instance, if there were only one double-valued note in the middle of a long measure, you would probably show it with a stem sign rather than to braille a long whole-measure in-accord, most of which would be transcriber-added rests. You would also rather not interrupt the flow of the music with a measure-division, a part-measure in-accord, and then another measure-division. On the other hand, if there were many double-stemmed notes in the measure, a whole-measure in-accord would probably be your choice.

When the values of the notes are not rhythmically rational in the meter of the music, you have no choice. There is no way to braille them except by showing the greater values as stem signs. Here are two examples:

Example 3

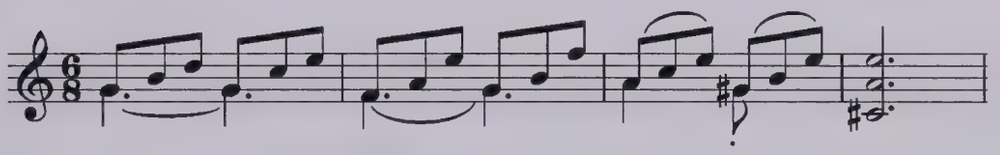


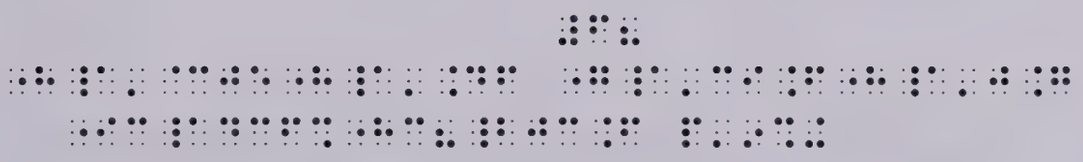
Example 4



Dots, slurs, or ties may follow stem signs just as if they were actual notes. Likewise, a nuance that applies to the value of the note represented by the stem sign may immediately precede it:

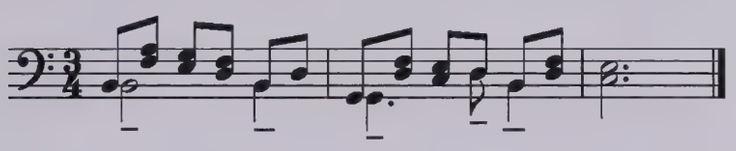
Example 5

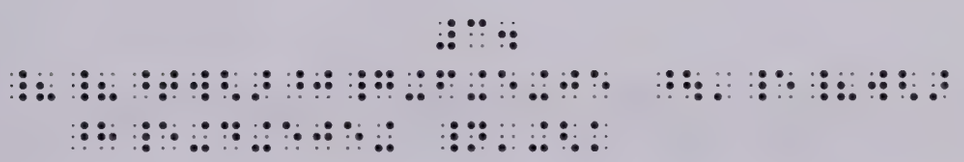




If the values of the notes in a measure or part-measure passage form a complete rational rhythm in the meter of the music, you may prefer to write the measure or passage as an in-accord. That way, the continuity of the melody remains clear.

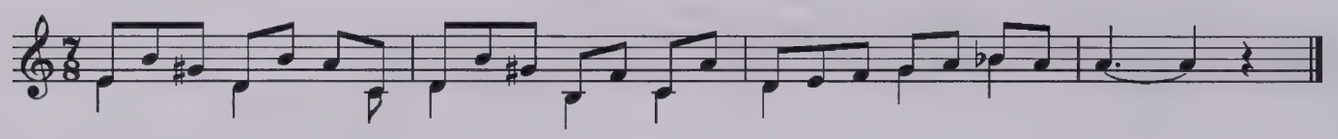
Example 6

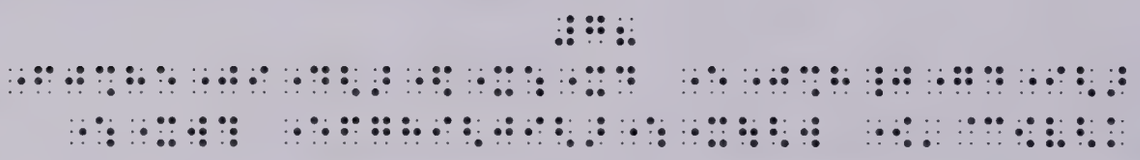




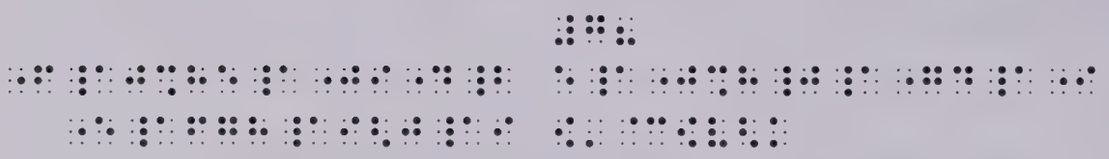
If the values of the notes with second stems in print would form a complete rational rhythm if you inserted a few transcriber-added rests, the difference between the two presentations is entirely your choice, and you must be guided by your best musical sense. Either of these transcriptions is correct.

Example 7



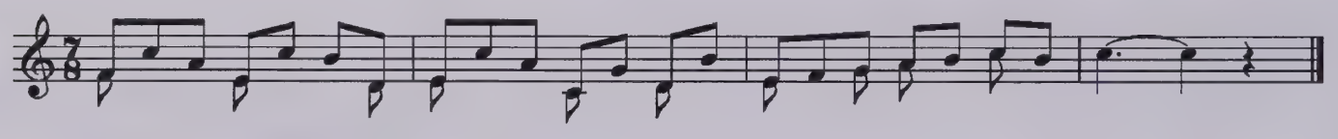


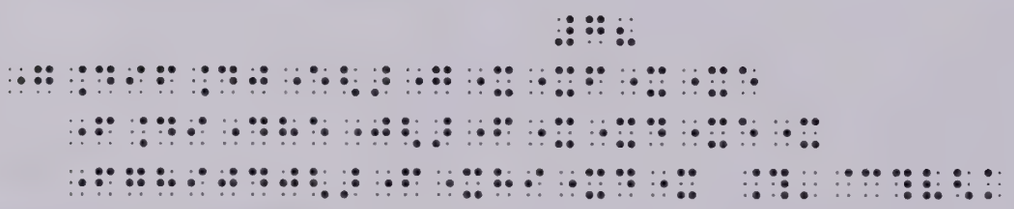
OR



Extra stems are sometimes added in print solely to convey musical emphasis. In such a case, you have to decide which presentation you would rather see if you were a braille reader.

Example 8

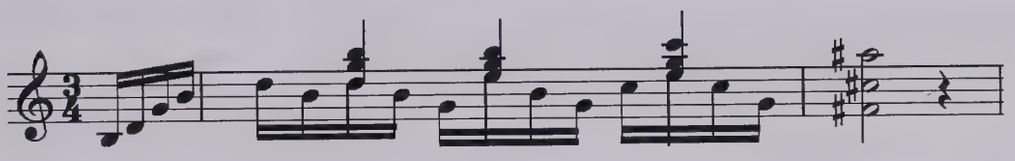


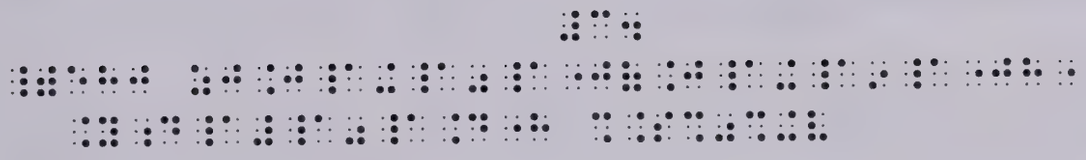


OR

When a chord is brailled with stem signs, you have to show the stem sign after each interval of the chord as well as after the written note:

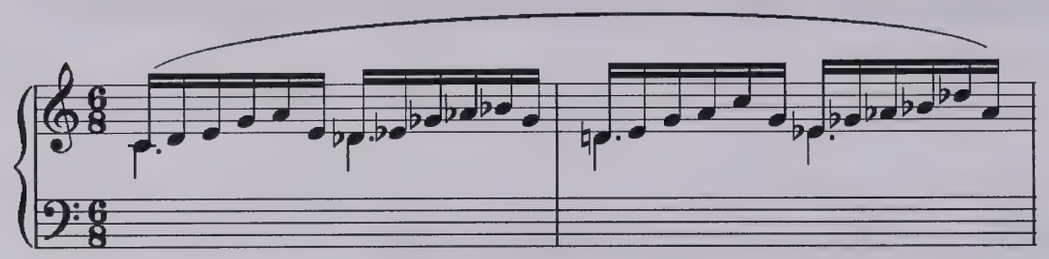
Example 9

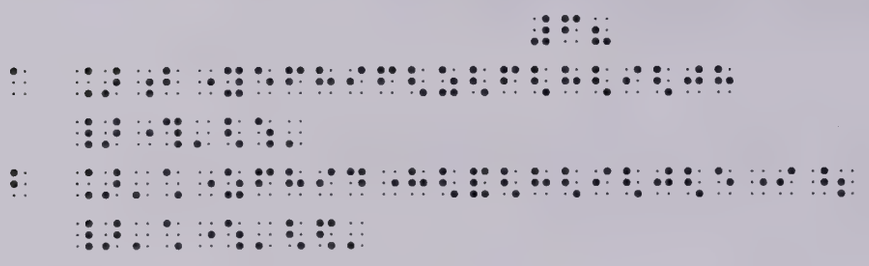




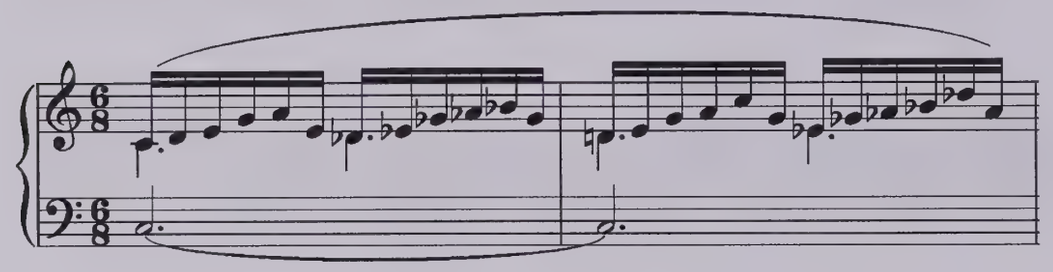
To emphasize the subtlety of stem signs, here are two examples in which exactly the same notes should be shown without either stem signs or in-accords (Example 10), and really ought to be shown with stem signs (Example 11). The only difference between the two is the assignment of the hands, and the print is none too clear about that.

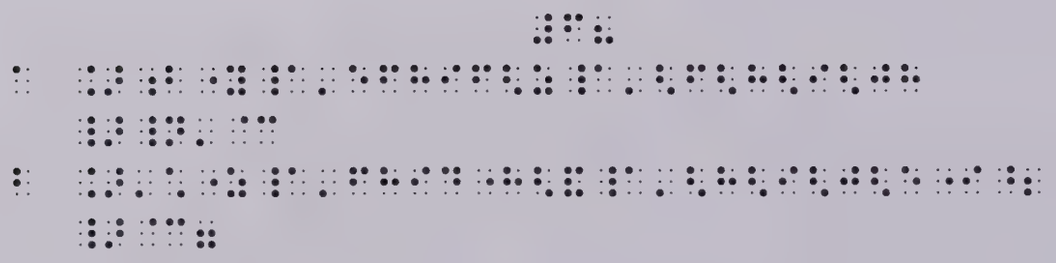
Example 10





Example 11





Unusual Ornaments

The signs for various ornaments may provide a daunting challenge. Tables 15(C) and 15(D) in MBC provide braille equivalents for many symbols. The appearance of a symbol is what is important to the transcriber, not the verbal description. It is not necessary for a transcriber to become a musicologist. Interpreting the signs is entirely up to the reader. In fact, the same sign may mean very different things from time to time, from composer to composer, or from edition to edition even of the same work.

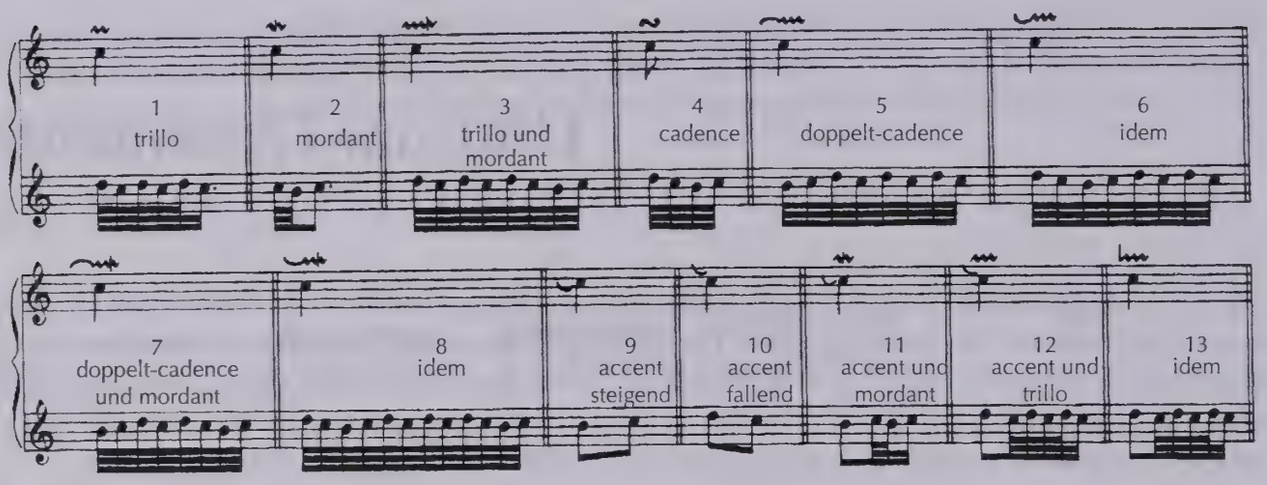
Most of the definitions given in the tables are descriptions of the shapes of the ornaments. If you encounter an ornament that is exactly like one in the tables, or nearly so, that is the braille sign that you should use, and you should show that sign on the Special Symbols page, with the definition as it appears in the tables. There are two exceptions to this general procedure.

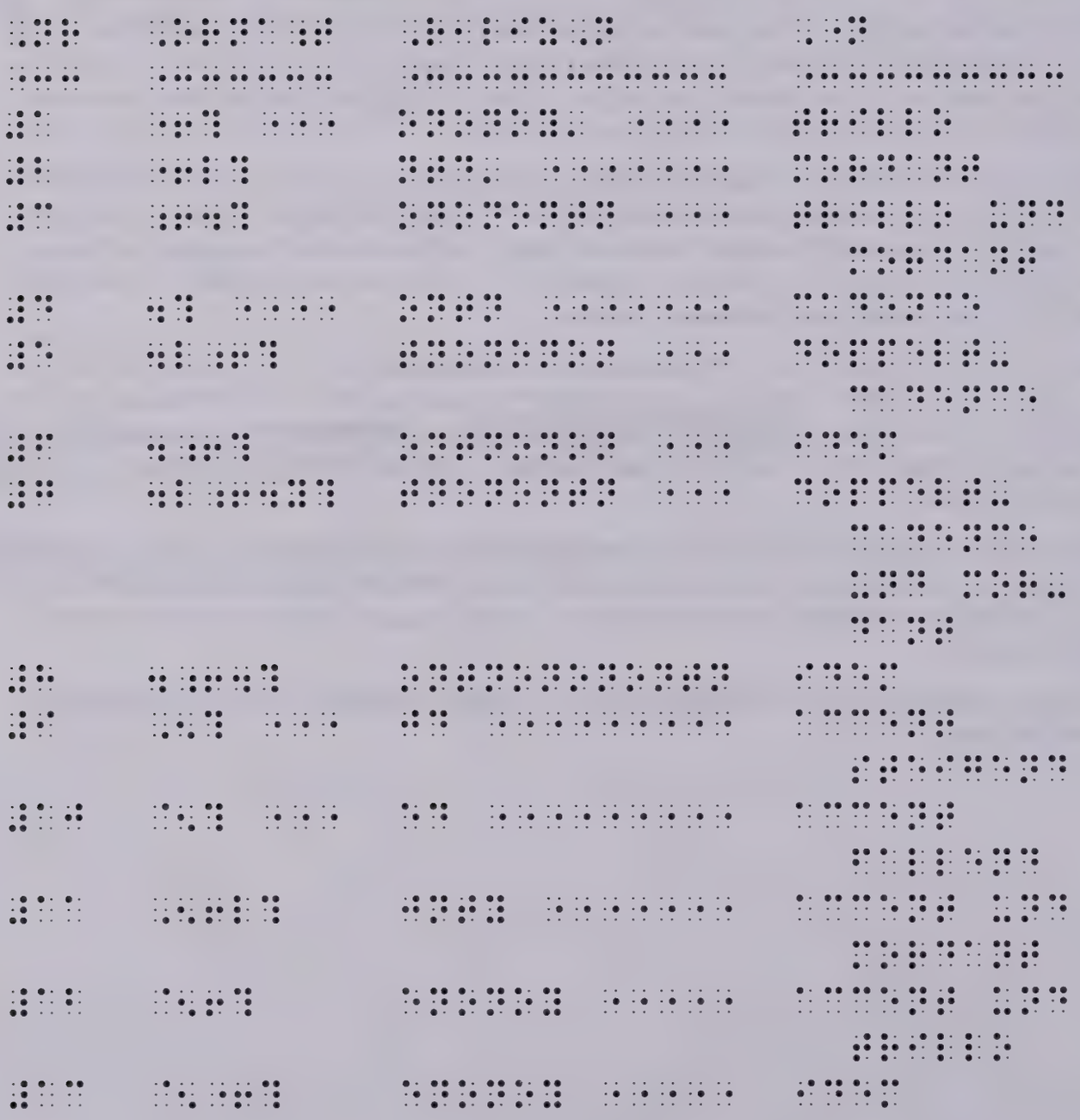
If you encounter an ornament that does not closely resemble one in the tables, and it is not defined somewhere in the print, you should describe its appearance as clearly as you can, either on the Special Symbols page or in a footnoted transcriber's note, and simply call it an unusual ornament. For this purpose, you might "borrow" one of the ornament signs from the tables, choosing one that is not employed anywhere else in the volume in its "legitimate" function.

Sometimes, special information about the ornaments of a composition or volume is found either in a preface or in footnotes. Those ornaments are very likely the same as some in the tables, or very like them. In that case, those signs should be given in the braille with the definitions that the print provides, in place of the definitions from the tables. It is not necessary in that case to say anything about the terminology from the tables.

As an example, the following chart is found in some editions of keyboard works of J. S. Bach. This chart should be given in braille where it appears in the print volume. Most of the signs look like those in the tables. You would have to combine elements of some of the braille signs in order to represent numbers 7, 8, and 13 accurately.

The following transcription is only a suggestion. No two such occurrences in various publications are likely to be the same.


1
trillo
2
mordant
3
trillo und
mordant
4
cadence
5
doppelt-cadence
6
idem
7
doppelt-cadence
und mordant
8
idem
9
accent
steigend
10
accent
fallend
11
accent und
mordant
12
accent und
trillo
13
idem

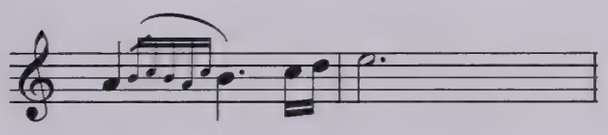


Unusual Print Signs

Since there is no limit to composers' imaginations, there can be no end to the possibilities of special music notation. In general, it is best to adapt existing braille signs whenever they seem appropriate. Any imaginable shape can be printed on a page; braille has only sixty-three characters to work with. If the music notation is not conveyed in notes on staves, one should consult with a specialist in tactile graphics to decide whether any usable transcription is possible.

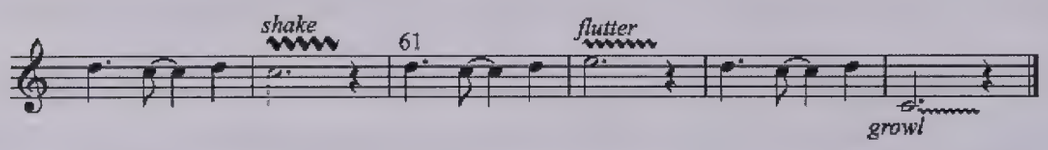
Example 1 shows a way that some publishers notate grace notes. The slash added to the group of sixteenth-note appoggiaturas need not be indicated in the braille because it does not change the meaning of the notes.

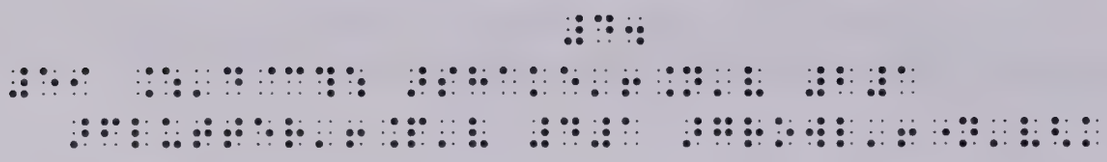
Example 1



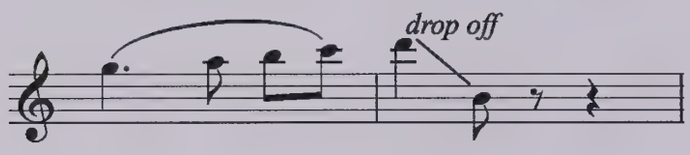
Notations in jazz styles frequently appear similar to traditional markings and represent similar effects. Instead of inventing new signs, you may braille what you see, adding any word-sign expressions that are associated with the print symbols. Example 2 shows three print signs that resemble signs for trills, with descriptive words attached. Example 3 shows a portamento between two notes, likewise with descriptive words.

Example 2



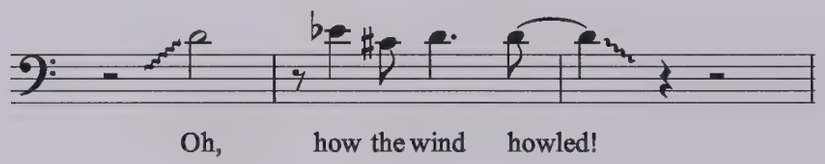


Example 3



Musical effects that once were relegated exclusively to one medium have now become commonplace in many styles and media. Often a sign that is defined in one table of MBC may be used freely in any other context. Example 4 includes an example of a slide into a note and a slide away from a note, in a choral part. The signs for these effects are found in Table 19(B). It is advisable to provide a transcriber's note defining these signs. It should be noted that whether the lines are straight or jagged is not significant in the common usage of these signs.

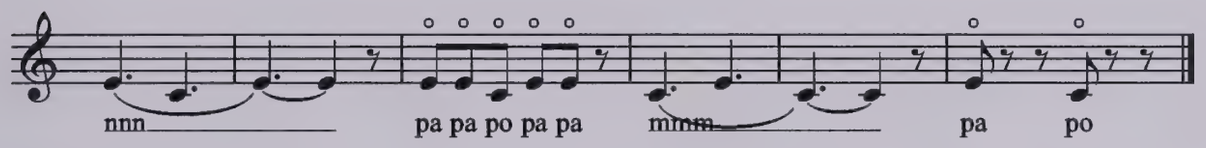
Example 4



Composers may devise special markings for special effects. If the new print signs resemble normal markings, it may be sensible to employ the normal markings in the braille, adding a TN to explain the

unusual application. In Example 5, a small circle has been printed above some notes in a choral part to invoke a special way of sounding the associated syllables. The sign for "circle for wind instruments" found in Table 19 has been used. The composer's detailed instruction has been used on the Special Symbols page to describe the use of the sign in this unusual context.

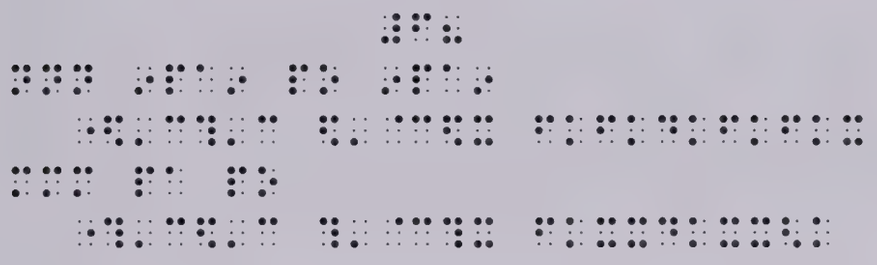
Example 5



On the Special Symbols page:

A small circle above a note means to mouth the word "pa" or "po," by popping moist lips, but not vocalizing the note.

In the soprano part:



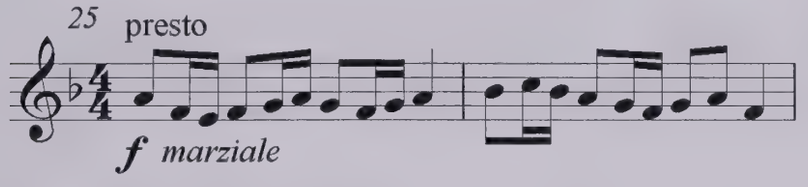
Word-Sign Expressions

All word expressions that use the word-sign should be uncontracted regardless of the language. There are two reasons for this. The first is that, in the spirit of the international agreements about the music braille code, all text that is in direct contact with music should be uncontracted so that interpretation of the music is not impeded by a reader having to look up contractions in various languages. The second reason is that a contraction that starts with a right-cell component could be mistaken for an octave mark and a note, misleading the reader into trying to resume reading music code.

The *New International Manual of Braille Music Notation* says that an expression consisting of two words such as "con brio" should be transcribed continuously, with a word-sign for each word. However, MBC-97 says that any expression that contains a space should be put between a pair of word-signs. Transcribers in BANA countries should follow the BANA rule until and unless the rule is changed.

When two or three expressions are printed at the same place in the music, you have some leeway about the order in which to braille expressions. The overriding principle regarding the order of signs and expressions is: "the broader the application of the item, the farther it may be from the note," or put the other way, "the more specific the instruction, the closer to the note it should be." A typical example would include a tempo, a style or mood, and a dynamic, as in the following illustration.

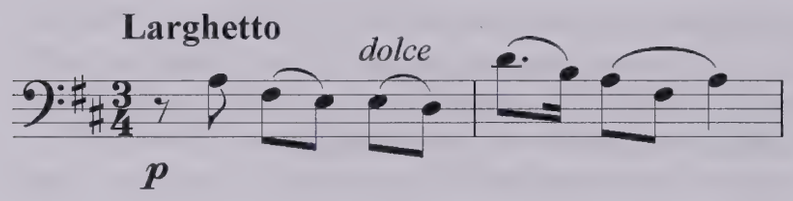
Example 1



The "f" applies immediately to the execution of the opening note, even though its effect carries on to the following notes as well, so it should come closest to the note. The "marziale" suggests a style that pervades the whole phrase or section. It should come farther from the note, before the "f." The "presto" is a tempo indication presumably applying broadly to all music that follows until a contradictory expression occurs, so it should be located farther from the note than either of the others. No one would fault you if you reversed the order of "marziale" and "presto" in this case.

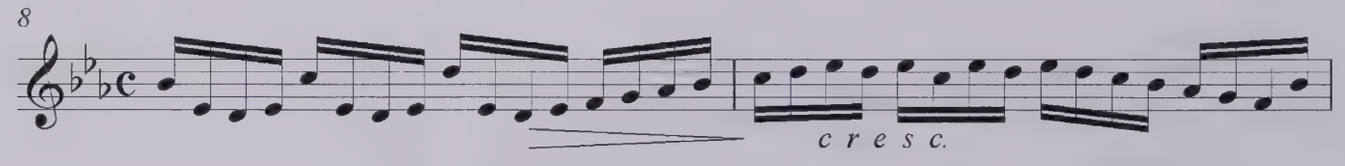
Your musicianship must prevail in choosing where to position an expression. You must make the decision about the meaning of the term and when it is intended to take effect. Engravers often seem to position such expressions mainly for convenience and appearance. In the following example, it does not seem sensible that the mood would suddenly turn "sweet" at the third beat. You would probably opt to braille the "dolce" before the "p."

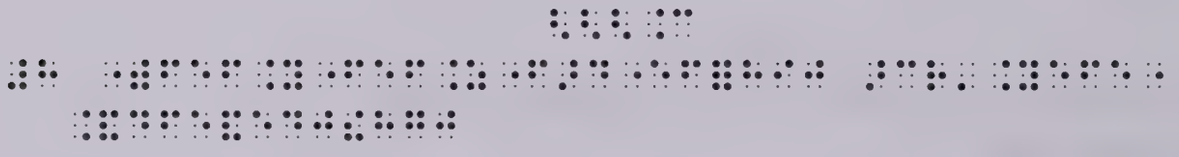
Example 2



Composers are generally much more precise about where they indicate instructions such as dynamics or tempo. You still have some room for judgment. Generally, for instance, the beginning of a "hairpin" crescendo is more precisely located in relation to the notes than is the abbreviation "cresc." In this example, the beginning of the hairpin is shown exactly with the note with which it appears, but the "cresc.," a more general indication, is at the beginning of the measure so as not to interrupt the coherence of the melody.

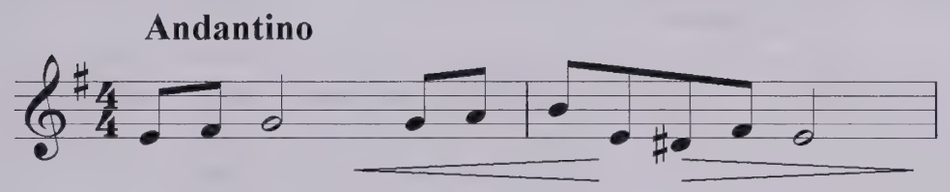
Example 3

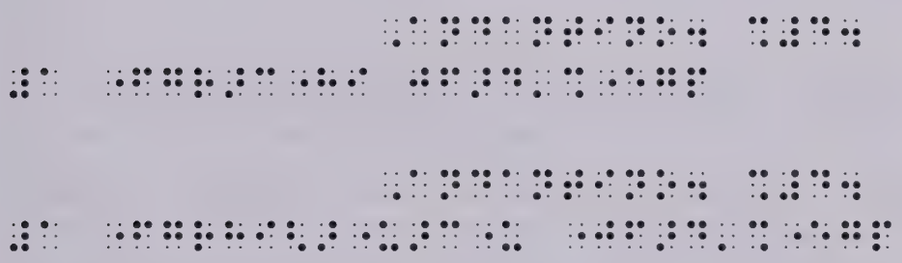




On the other hand, it is possible to get caught up in too much fussiness. A hairpin that is initiated halfway through a half note in piano music may reasonably be relocated in the braille either before the half note or before the next note, since the piano cannot begin to swell in the middle of a held note. But beware; the same notation in string or wind music might well require using an in-accord with transcriber-added rests to show the composer's intention. The first transcription of this example is for glockenspiel. The second is for clarinet.

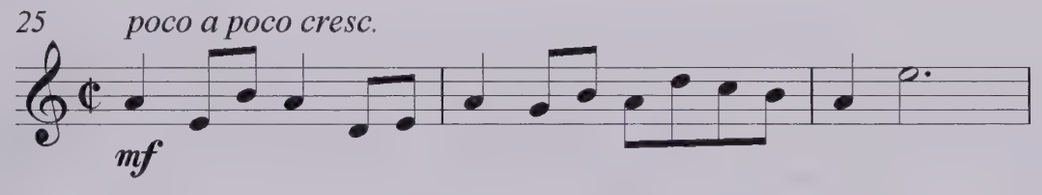
Example 4

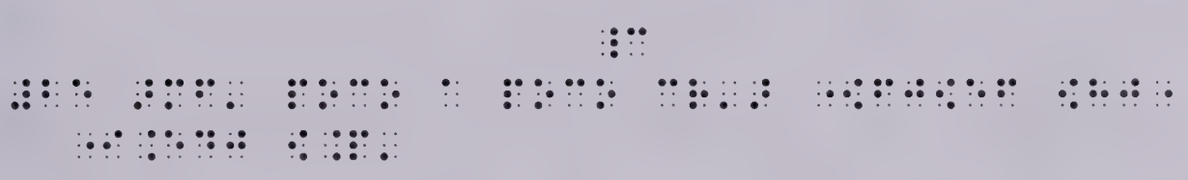




Two or more expressions may be combined into a longer one when they are parts of the same idea. In Example 5 for instance, when "mf" is shown with the notes and "poco a poco cresc." is printed above the staff, it makes sense to put the "mf" at the opening of a combined expression. It would be contradictory to braille the "poco a poco cr." before the measure and then show the "mf" as the first element in the music of the measure. (Remember that when a dynamic mark occurs within a longer expression, it is treated as an abbreviation and needs its dot-3 period.)

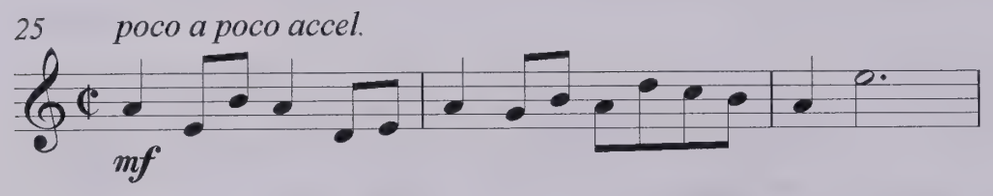
Example 5

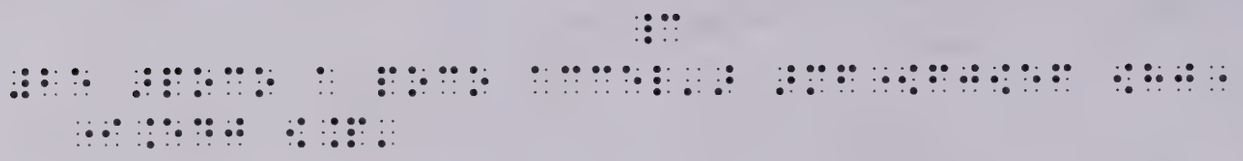




However, if the expression above the staff were not about dynamics, but for instance tempo, such as "poco a poco accel.," the different ideas should be brailled separately in the appropriate places.

Example 6





Music for Bowed String Instruments

When in doubt . . .

Performance techniques in string music and their notation can be complex. As a rule, transcribers expect to seek advice whenever they see something that they do not clearly understand. This practice should be applied to an exponential degree in reference to markings that are found in string music. Section 23 of *Music Braille Code 1997* contains further instructions that are not included here.

Clefs

Clef signs are not included in the transcription unless it is a facsimile transcription. Insertion of the clef signs does not in any way affect the transcription.

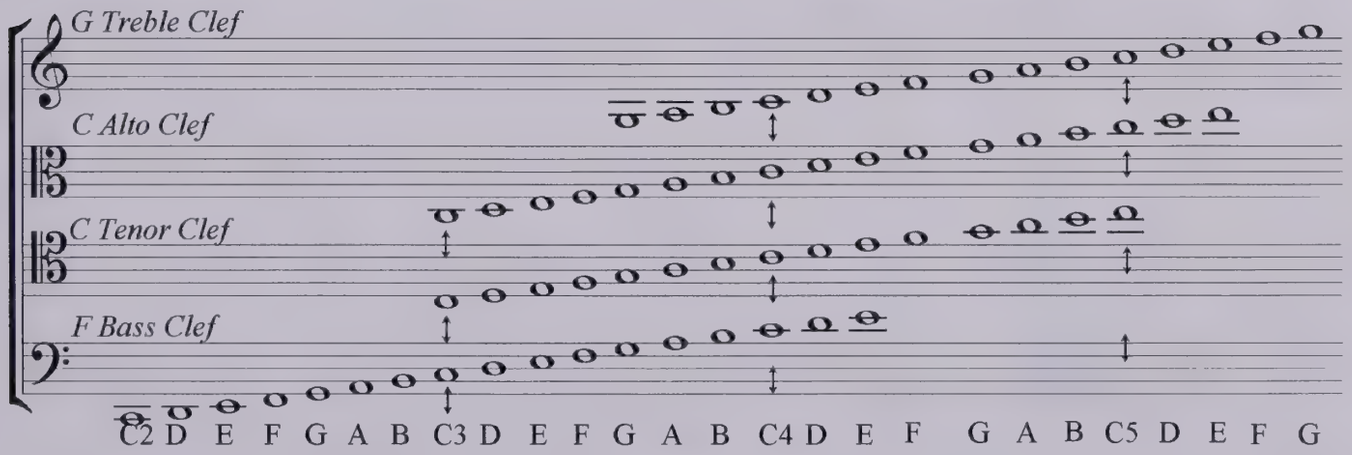
Violinists read only in the G treble clef, sometimes with an "8va" marking. The "8va" is not included in the braille; the notes are transcribed in the octave in which they are to sound. Some of the string players of the orchestra read music in the moveable C clef. The center of the clef sign is an ornate letter C which always marks the staff line that represents middle C (fourth octave C to braillists).

Violists normally read in the alto clef, in which the middle line of the staff is middle C. When viola music is pitched unusually high, it is sometimes written in the G treble clef.

Cellists normally read in the F bass clef, but when their music is pitched higher than usual, the tenor clef is sometimes employed. (The same is true of bassoonists and trombonists.) Middle C in the tenor clef is located on the fourth line of the staff.

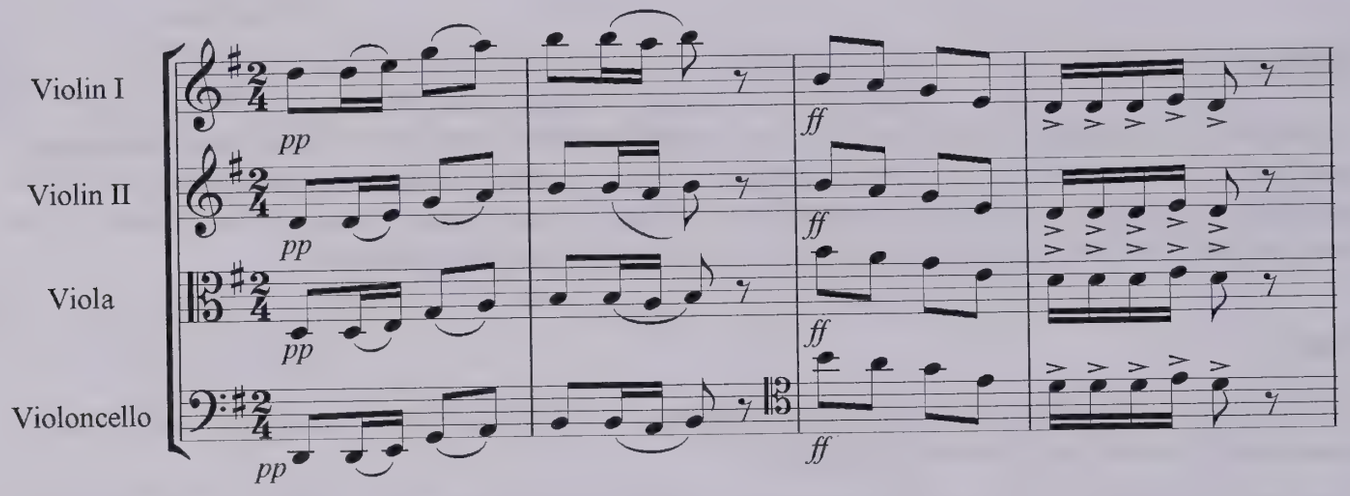
Table 1

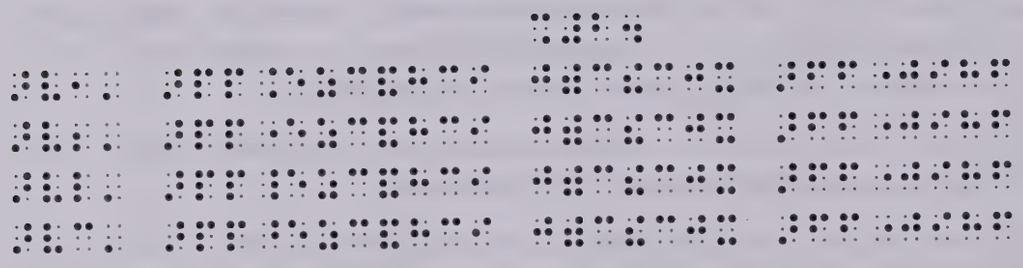
The notes are shown in treble, alto, tenor and bass clefs in this chart.

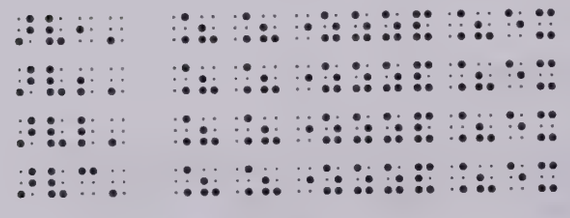


In this score, the string quartet plays in four octaves and then in unison. The parallel motion device could have been used in this transcription, but has not been in order to emphasize reading the notes in the various clefs.

Example 1







Bowing

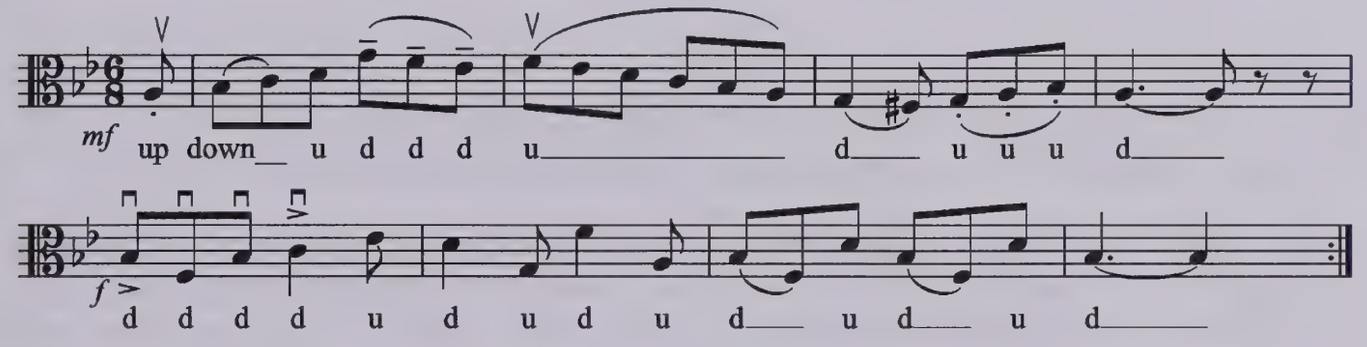
An up-bow ⠸⠳ or down-bow ⠸⠩ sign should be placed as close to the note as possible. It follows a word-sign expression, dynamic marking, or opening bracket slur, and precedes only an ornament, a nuance, accidental, or octave mark.

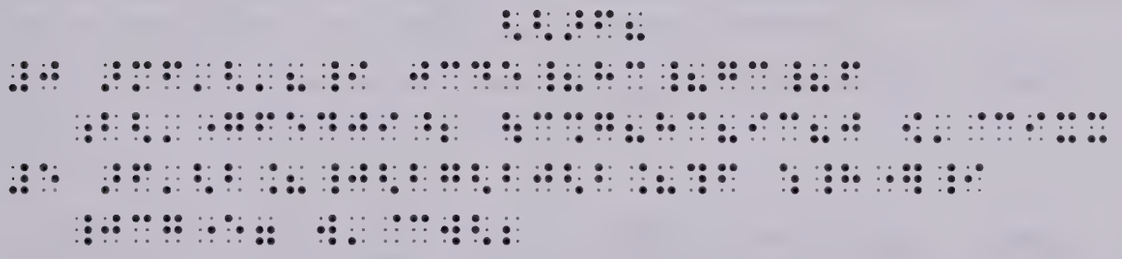
A slur in string music is what tells the player to continue the direction of the bow. The end of a slur, or the absence of one, tells the player to change bow direction. A long slur (four or more notes) may be shown with bracket slurs or with the doubled-slur device.

A bowing sign may be doubled if it applies to four or more successive notes. The entire two-cell sign must be doubled. The code neither requires nor forbids doubling.

The marking in the second half of the first full measure in Example 2, which combines a slur and tenuto marks, is termed louré bowing. The marking in measure 3, which shows a slur combined with staccato dots, is called slurred staccato bowing.

Example 2

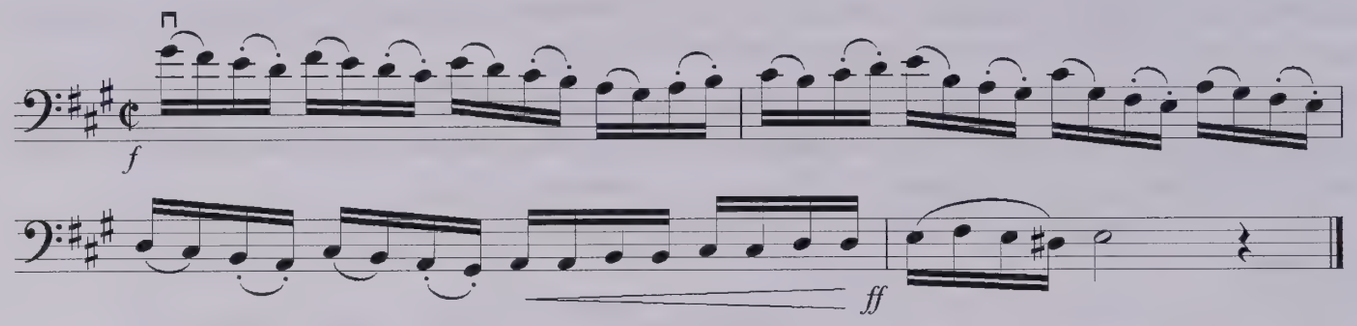


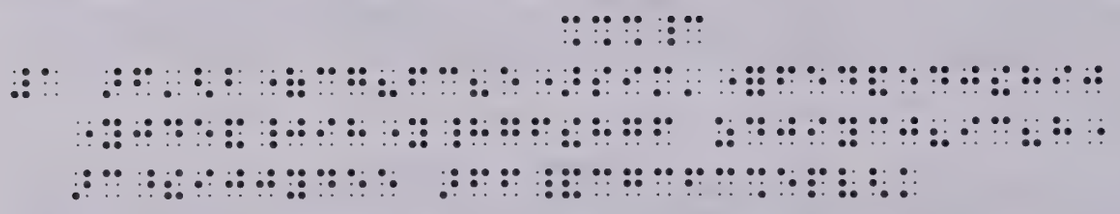


It is often useful to employ the dot-5 transcriber-added "sim." when a pattern of bowing continues for an extended time. The reader may appreciate not having to read the same markings over and over.

In Example 3 it is necessary to terminate the "sim." by marking the last of the repetitions because the following beat has the same rhythm, but has a bowing that does not have bowing marks. If the following beat had shown a new rhythm or a new bowing pattern, the change would have been sufficient to clarify the termination of the repetitions.

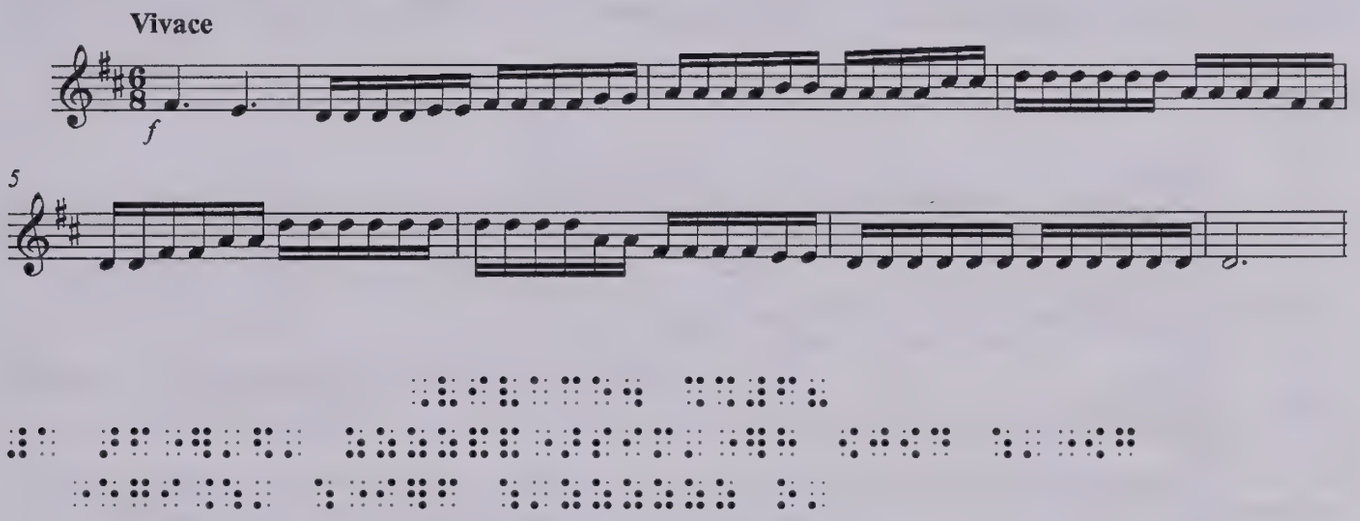
Example 3





The "sim." device may be used to the reader's advantage when a pattern of reiterative bowing occurs for an extended passage, even if the notes have been written out in the print. The initial instance must be written in true values; grouping may not be used. Following the dot-5 "sim." indication, the summed values of the notes are given in the braille. You terminate the device by writing out the true values of the notes in the last occurrence of the pattern. Example 4 is probably about the shortest passage that would justify using the unusual device.

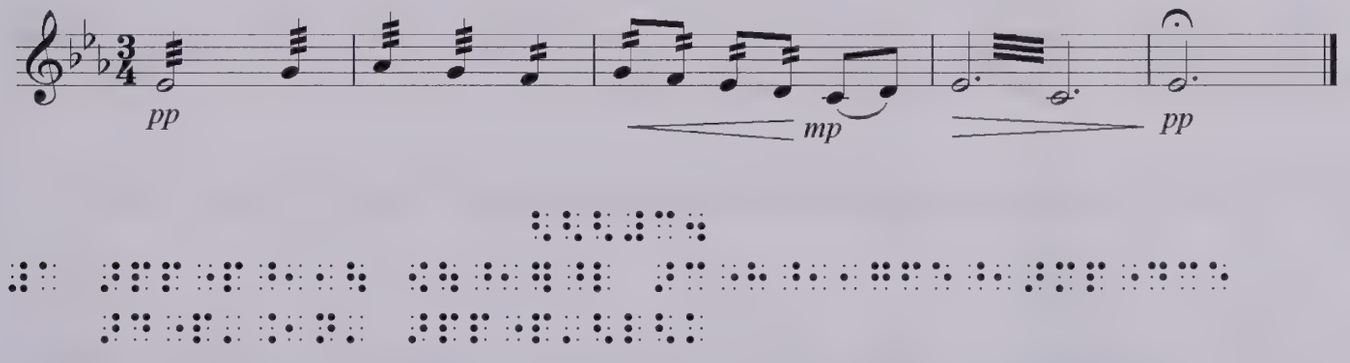
Example 4



A bowed or fingered tremolo is transcribed in braille just as it is printed. Bowed tremolo may be referred to as fractioning or note repetition. If the slash marks across the stems of the notes indicate eighth or sixteenth notes, the tremolo is measured. If the slash marks indicate thirty-second notes or smaller values, the tremolo may be either measured or unmeasured. Since the appearance is the same in print, it is not up to the transcriber to try to decide, or to show any difference.

It is important to remember that a beam or a flag is to be counted in calculating the values of the notes.

Example 5

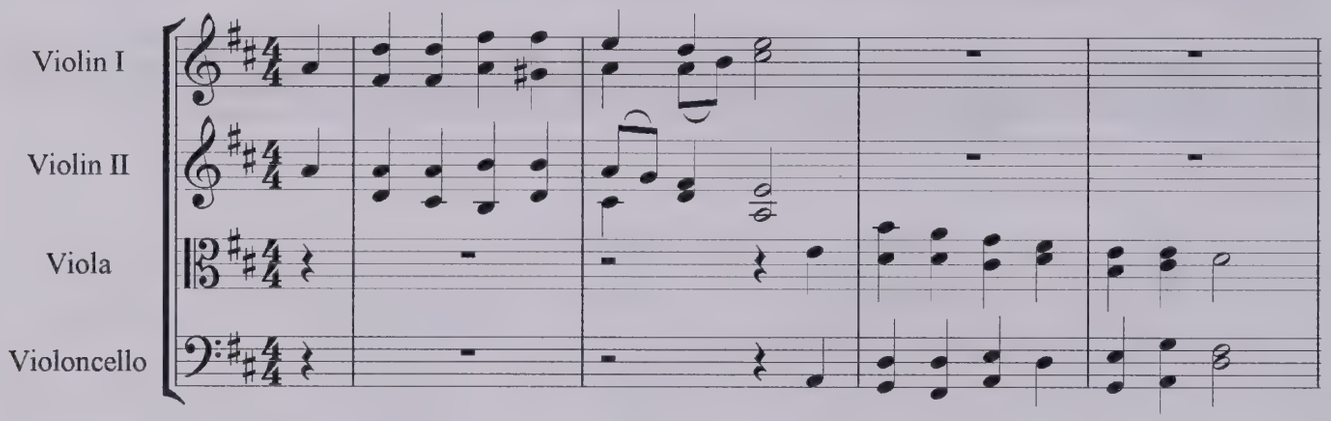


Chords

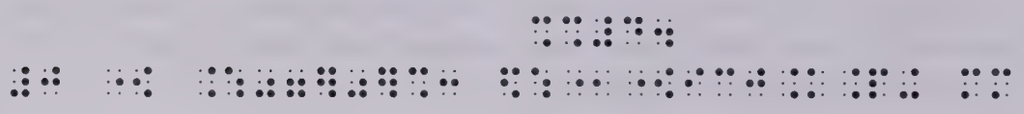
Violinists and violists read intervals downward, and cellists and bassists read them upward, regardless of which clef their music is written in. The intervals are transcribed in braille just as they are in keyboard music. Likewise, if two or more simultaneous rhythms are given in a measure, an in-accord presentation is required. In bar-over-bar score format, for study or for a conductor, all intervals are written upward.

The four-part harmonization from a chorale is achieved in Example 6 by two violins each playing double stops, and then by a viola and a cello similarly in double stops. A part-measure in-accord is required in each violin part in measure 2.

Example 6



Violin I:



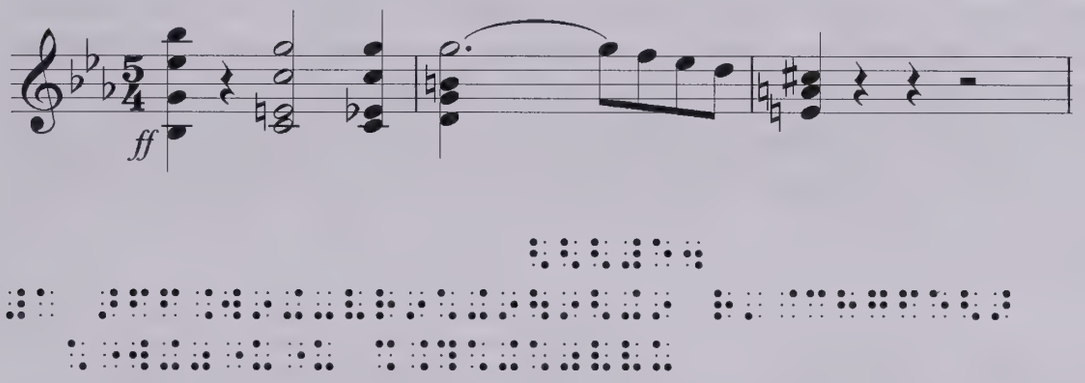
Violin II:

Viola:

Cello:

Triple and quadruple stops are brailled as printed, regardless of the fact that only one or two of the notes can be sustained. If the note(s) to be sustained have been notated in longer values than the notes that must be dropped, it is necessary to braille the chord as an in-accord and supply the missing rests with the dot-5 indication that the rests are not included in the print.

Example 7



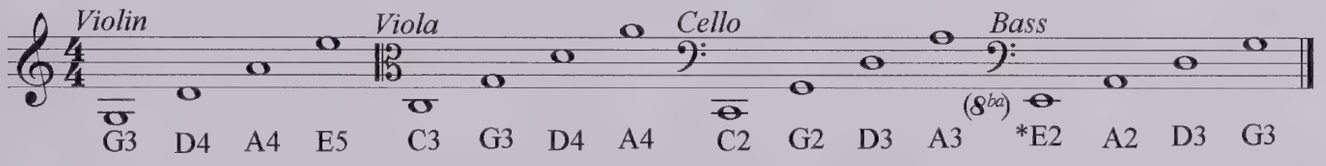
Open strings and typical fingerings

Fingerings in string music are brailled the same way as they are in keyboard music. The meanings of the markings are not the same, however. String players do not count their thumbs as fingers; the index finger is called the first finger, and the "pinky" is the fourth finger.

The small circle that looks like a degree symbol over (rarely below) a note indicates that it is to be played open, that is, without any fingers stopping the string. The braille sign that represents the circle is the sign ⠩ which in keyboard music stands for the fifth finger. It is appropriate, therefore, that in string music the "fifth finger" represents "no finger."

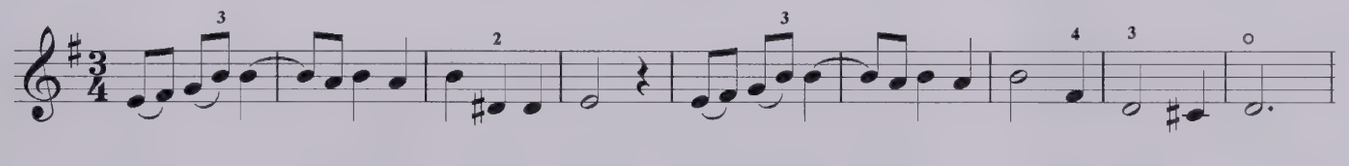
Table 2

The open strings to which the instruments are tuned are:



* Contrabass is notated in braille as it is written even though it actually sounds an octave lower.

Example 8

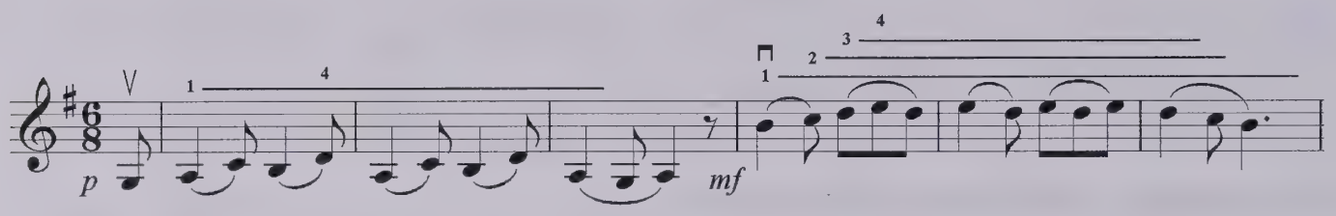


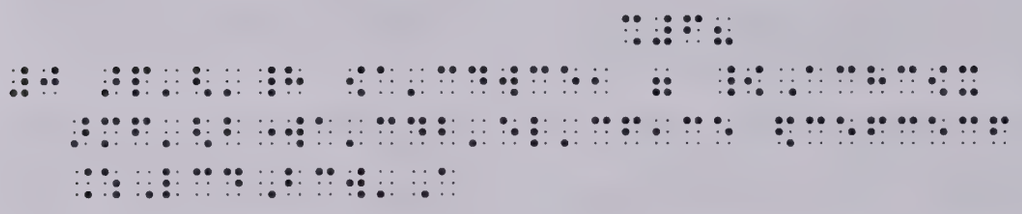
Special finger markings

Lines of continuation with fingerings

Sometimes a string player is to hold a finger that is stopping a string in place while another finger stops the same string at a higher point. The instruction is printed as a line of continuation extending from the finger number, above the notes. In braille, the start of the line is indicated by placing dot 3 after the finger sign. The end of the line is indicated by re-marking the finger sign, preceded by a dot 6, after the last affected note; the finger sign is restated even though it is not written in the print. More than one line of continuation may be shown at the same time.

Example 9

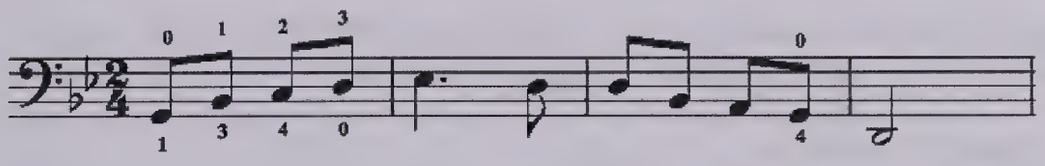




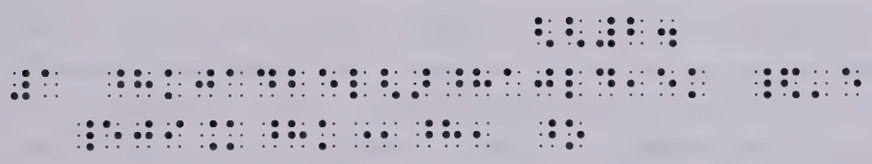
Alternate fingerings

Alternate fingerings cannot be shown in string music as they are shown in keyboard music because the braille devices for doing so are used to show harmonics and/or lines of continuation. Therefore, the alternate versions must be written out as in-accords, as variant measures, or as footnotes. Example 10 shows a passage with the alternate fingerings displayed each of the three ways.

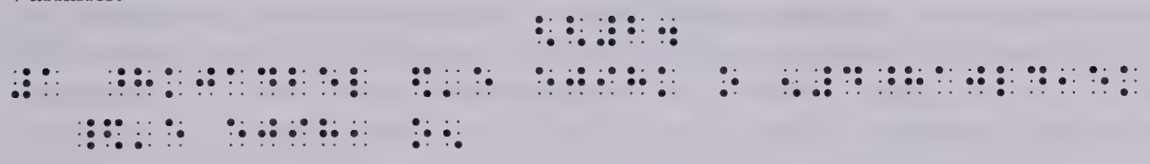
Example 10



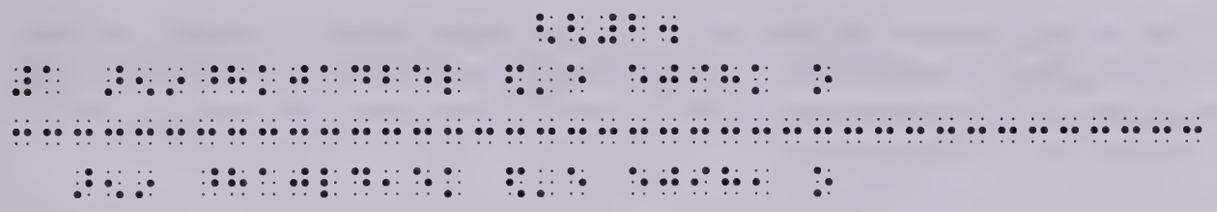
In-accords:



Variants:



Footnote:



String signs and positions

There may be indications in the print music to tell the player on which string to play the following music. There may also be markings that tell the player where to position his hand along the fingerboard. These markings are often difficult for a transcriber who is not a string player to understand and therefore to transcribe properly.

Roman numerals

Roman numerals may appear above or below the notes to indicate either the number of the string on which to play or to indicate the hand position. Roman numerals are not used for both purposes in the same score. It is necessary to ascertain which function they have in a given score because in neither case will they be transcribed as roman numerals.

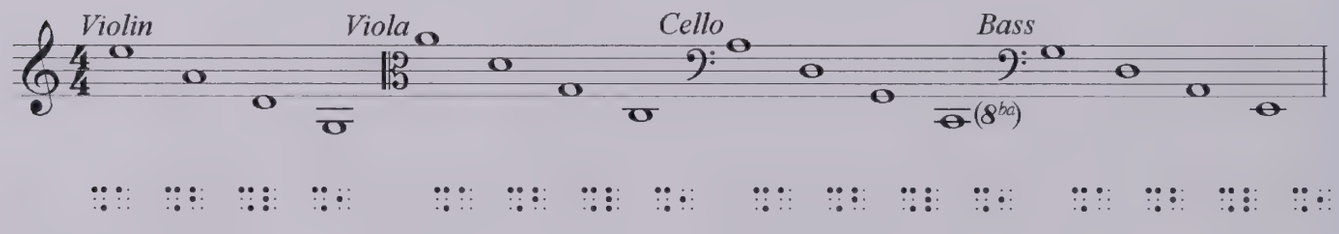
String signs

The string on which the notes are to be played may be shown in print by either of two markings. The most usual marking is the letter name of the string preceded by the word "sul" (Italian for "on the"); occasionally only the letter will appear. The other common marking is a roman numeral designating the string counting downward from the highest. The E string on a violin is I, the A string is II, the D string is III, and the G string is IV.

The roman numeral notation must be approached with caution; the usage varies from country to country, and through history anywhere. Sometimes one can tell what is meant by careful examination of the contexts in which the symbols appear. If there is any roman numeral greater than "IV," the roman numerals must be designating positions. Likewise, if *sul G* or *sul A*, for instance, appears in the score, any roman numerals most likely indicate positions. However, this is very often a good situation in which to resort to "When in doubt . . ."

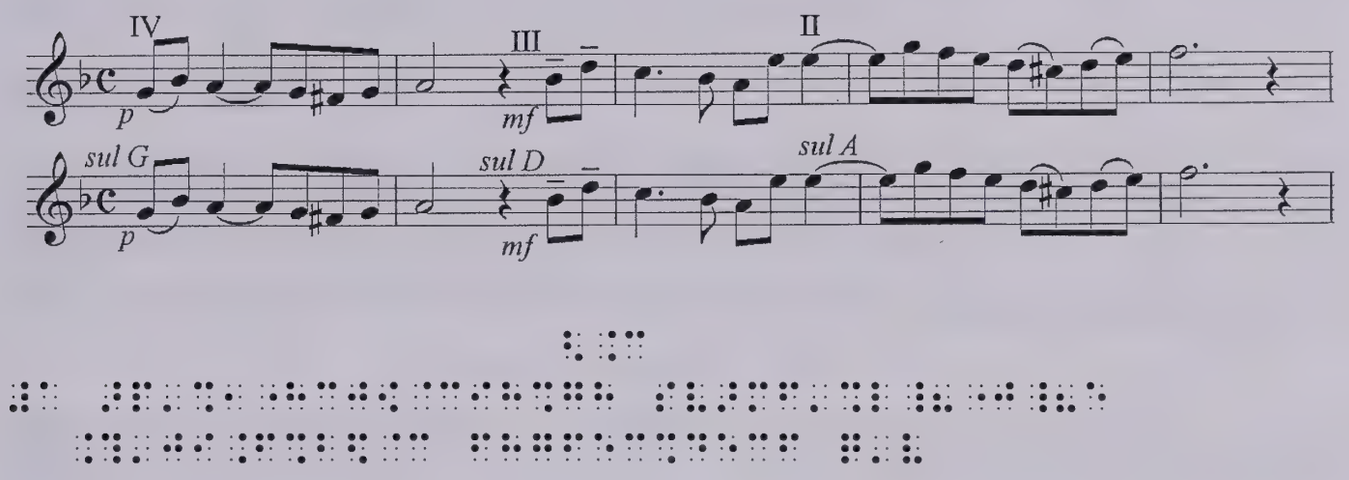
Regardless of how a string is indicated in print, in braille the indication is the string number, counting downward from the highest. When the strings are indicated with a combination of numerals or letters or words, the string signs should be substituted except in facsimile transcriptions. The string signs for the instruments are shown in the following table.

Table 3



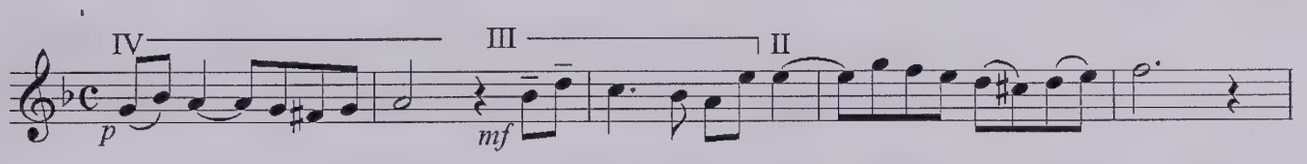
The string sign is brailled before the note and before an opening bracket slur, an ornament, or a nuance. No special octave mark is needed following a string sign. Example 11 shows a passage printed with roman numerals to indicate strings, and then with the letter names of the strings. It is brailled the same way in either case.

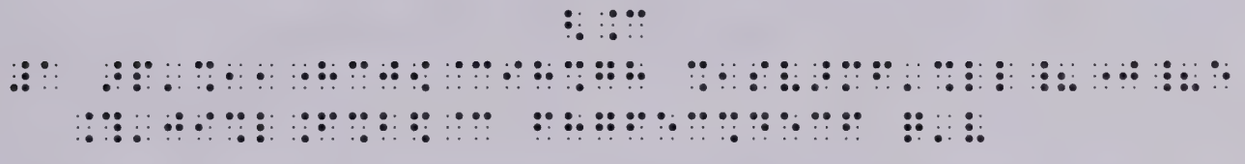
Example 11



Sometimes a string indication includes a line of continuation. If so, the start of the line is brailled by doubling the second cell of the sign, and the end of the line is shown by brailling the sign before the last affected note.

Example 12





Positions

The position of the hand along the fingerboard may be indicated in print by a roman numeral or an arabic numeral. Just as is true of the string signs, special signs are used in braille, instead of the numerals. There are only four strings, but there are twelve positions, including the half-position. The braille position signs are as follows:

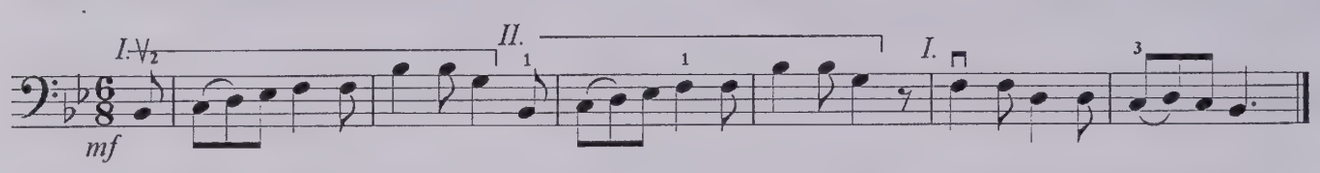
1st	⠼⠁	4th	⠼⠙	7th	⠼⠛	10th	⠼⠁⠚
2nd	⠼⠃	5th	⠼⠑	8th	⠼⠓	11th	⠼⠁⠁
3rd	⠼⠉	6th	⠼⠋	9th	⠼⠊	half	⠼⠭

A position sign is brailled before the note and before a bowing sign or a nuance, but after an opening bracket slur. Sometimes a position indication includes a line of continuation. The start of the line is shown by brailling dot 3 twice following the sign. The end of the line may be shown by brailling the termination sign ⠸⠸ after the last affected note. It is not necessary to show the termination if a new position sign follows immediately.

An octave mark is always required for the first note following a position sign.

Roman numerals are used as position indicators in Example 11. Arabic numerals could have been used instead; the braille would be the same.

Example 13



Harmonics

A harmonic (an overtone, sometimes called a partial or a "flageolet tone") is produced by lightly touching the string in a particular place. The sound produced is higher in pitch than the open string or the pitch of the string when firmly stopped, and has an ethereal tone quality.

When a harmonic is produced by touching an open string, it is called a natural harmonic. When it is produced by touching a string that is being firmly stopped by another finger, it is called an artificial harmonic. The two types of harmonics are notated differently in print.

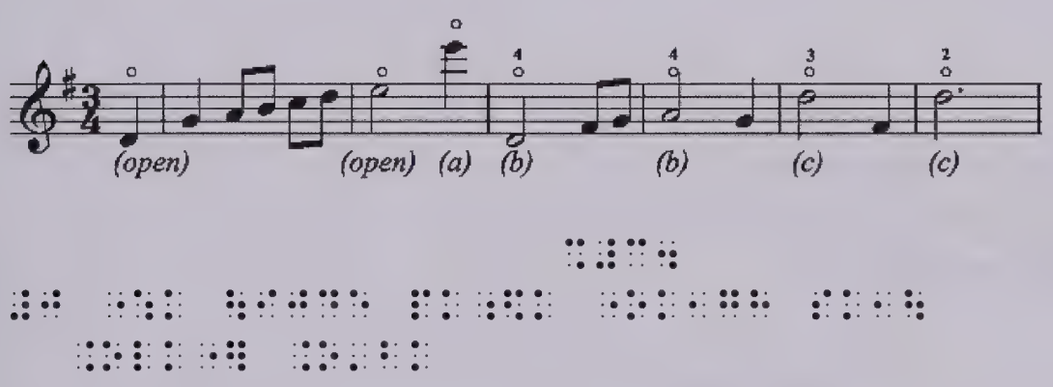
Natural Harmonics

If a finger number and the open string sign both appear above one of the open string notes, the open sign is brailled before the fingering sign. See (b) in Example 14. The resulting sound will be an octave above the fundamental pitch of the string, in the timbre of a harmonic.

If the open sign appears alone over a note that is not an open string, it represents a natural harmonic at that pitch, and the player is expected to know how to obtain it and on which string. See (a) in Example 14.

If, however, the open sign (which will now designate a natural harmonic of an open string, not the open string itself) and a finger number both appear over any note **other than those four specific notes on the instrument**, the order is reversed, and the fingering sign is brailled before the open sign. See (c). The resulting sound will be at the pitch of the written note, but in the timbre of a harmonic.

Example 14



This choice of the order of the signs is the only time that the transcriber must be aware of the relationship between the pitch of the affected note and the result of the action that is taken by the player. In all other cases, it is only necessary to faithfully transmit what appears in the print.

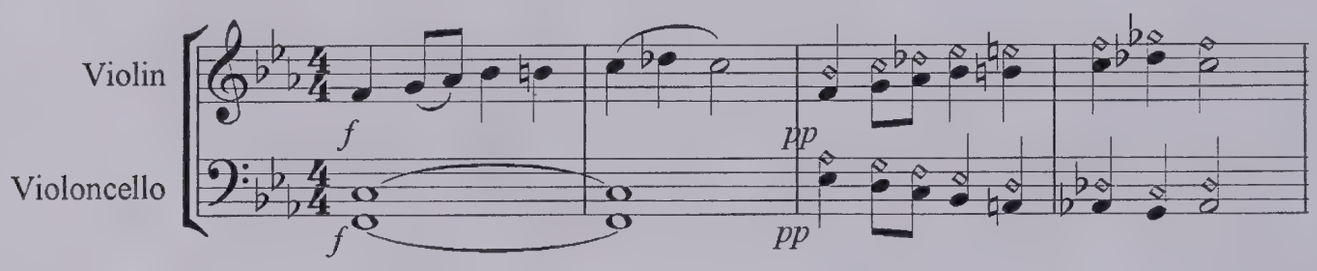
Artificial harmonics

When a string that is being stopped is lightly touched at the point where it would be stopped to produce the pitch a perfect fourth higher, a harmonic two octaves above the stopped note will be produced, and the pitch of the stopped note will be suppressed. The print indication is a normal note at the stopping-point with a diamond-shaped note head above it at the note where the light touch is to be positioned. Fingerings may or may not be provided.

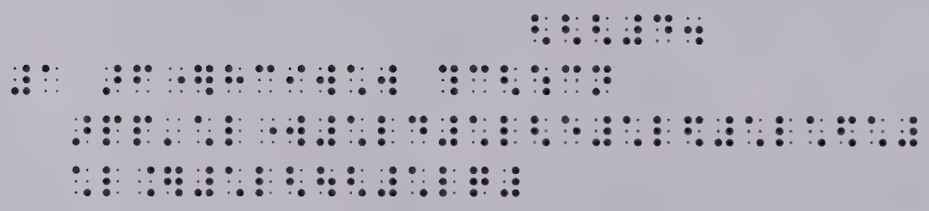
The braille transcription of artificial harmonics takes up a good deal of space. The normal note and the diamond-shaped note will always consist of a note and an interval sign. The diamond-shaped note or interval is immediately preceded by the artificial-harmonic sign ⠒⠒; only an accidental and an octave sign may come between them. The artificial-harmonic sign may not be doubled.

If the music is for violin or viola, the diamond note will be given first and the normal note shown as an interval. If it is for a cello or bass, the normal note will come first and the diamond note will be expressed as an interval. In score format all intervals would be read upward.

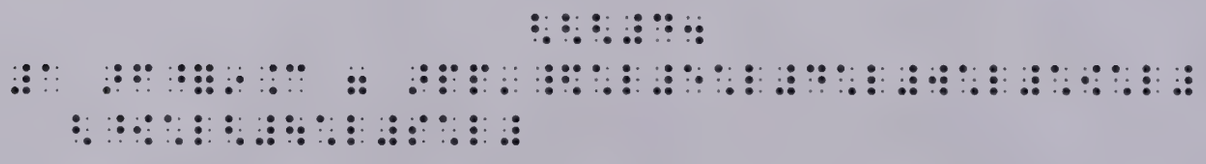
Example 15



Violin:



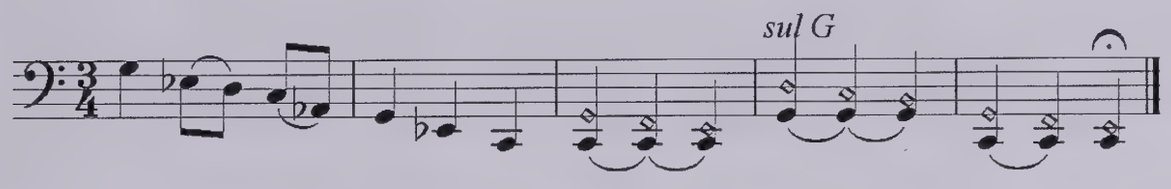
Cello:

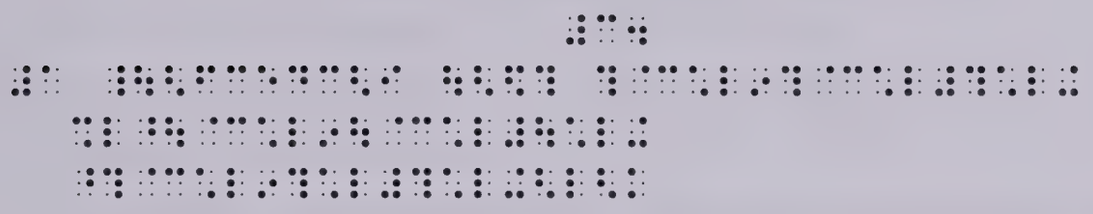


Unusual natural harmonics

Natural harmonics other than those at the octave are notated like artificial harmonics. The pitch of the open string is notated as a normal note and the point at which the string is to be lightly touched is shown as a diamond-shaped note. The open string is usually also specified by a string sign except when it is the lowest string of the instrument, in which case it is obvious which string is meant. The transcription is the same as for an artificial harmonic. In fact, the transcriber need not know the difference.

Example 16





Classical Guitar Music

Notation and format

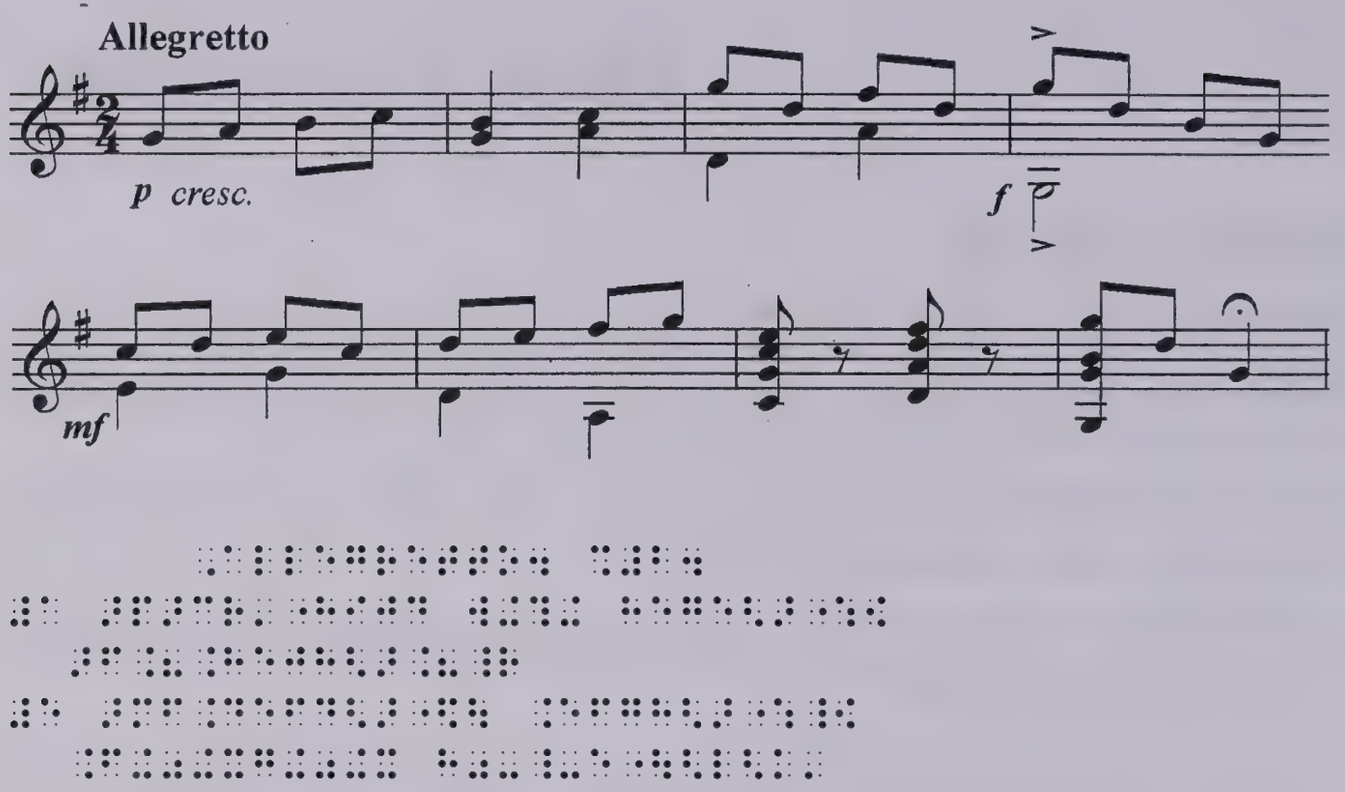
The guitar is a string instrument and therefore uses many braille signs employed in other string music. But as a plucked string instrument, guitar notation requires several unique symbols and alternative interpretations of a few of the BANA rules for stringed instruments. Special symbols and codes for classical guitar notation are included in Table 23 and Section 23 of *Music Braille Code 1997.*

Only music staff notation is discussed here. Picture notation or chord diagrams are discussed in Sections 23.28 through 23.30 of MBC-97. Regarding tablature notation, Section 23.31.1 states that "this method would be entirely unsuitable for use with braille music. . . ."

Printed guitar music is written in the treble clef, an octave above sounding pitch. Occasionally, treble clefs are printed with a subscript 8 indicating the difference between the sounding pitch and the written note, but the 8 is usually not shown.

The printed music can appear as single notes, chords, or as two or three polyphonic voices—all on a single staff with a treble clef sign. Notes are brailled in the octave shown in print; if the subscript 8 is printed, it is ignored. Intervals and in-accords are read downward. Single-line format is used for guitar music. An octave sign is required at the beginning of each line or for any measure following in-accord. Braille segments should usually run from two to five lines, depending on the nature of the music.

Example 1



Fingering

Music for the guitar often shows fingering signs for both the left hand (creating notes by pressing on the frets of each string) and the right hand (plucking the strings to create the sound and rhythm of each note).

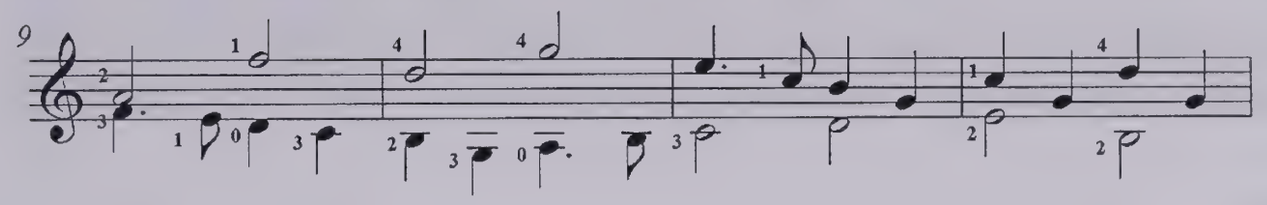
Left-hand fingering

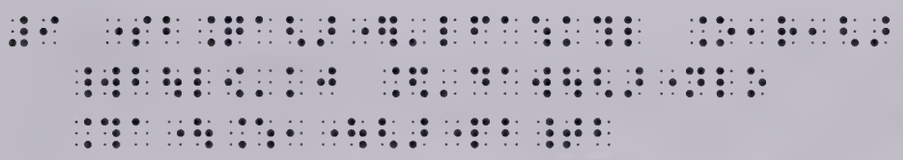
Arabic numerals show left-hand fingering in print. In braille, the fingering sign follows the note or interval.

Table 1

Finger	Numeral	Braille
1st / index	1	⠁
2nd / middle	2	⠃
3rd / ring	3	⠇
4th / little	4	⠉
0 / open	0	⠚

Example 2





Right-hand fingering

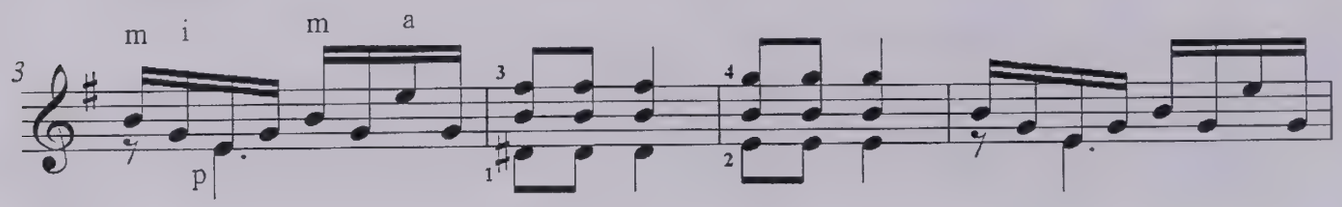
The letters *p, i, m, a* (forming the acronym "pima") are the internationally accepted symbols for the right-hand fingers in classical guitar music. Right-hand fingering, shown in print by dots or methods other than the pima letters, is "translated" into pima fingering and brailled as such. Right-hand fingering is brailled as literary letters.

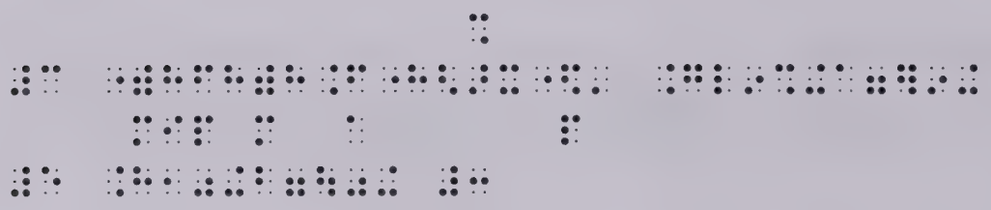
Table 2

Finger	Symbol (Spanish Name)	Braille
thumb	p (pulgar)	⠏
1st / index	i (indice)	⠊
2nd / middle	m (medio)	⠍
3rd / ring	a (anular)	⠁
4th / little	c (chico)	⠉

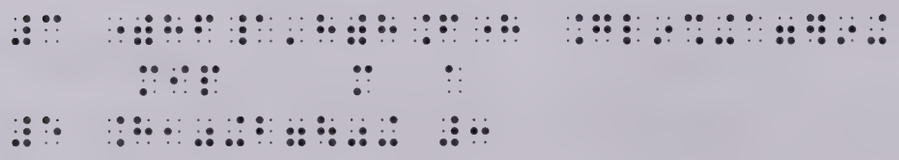
Where pima fingering is given, a second braille line is introduced. The music is shown on the first line, and the letters on the second line directly below the notes or intervals affected. A letter should be aligned with the note or interval and not with an accidental, octave mark, left-hand fingering, or other modifying signs. This modification does not constitute a new format; it is a variant of the basic single-line format.

Example 3





This example can also be brailled using a stem sign in the first measure (repeated in the last measure). The stem sign is a convenient substitute for a one-note in-accord when the note forms a unison with a note in the other voice.



A note about stem signs

Stem signs can and should be used frequently in guitar transcriptions. Here is a summary of the braille stem signs.

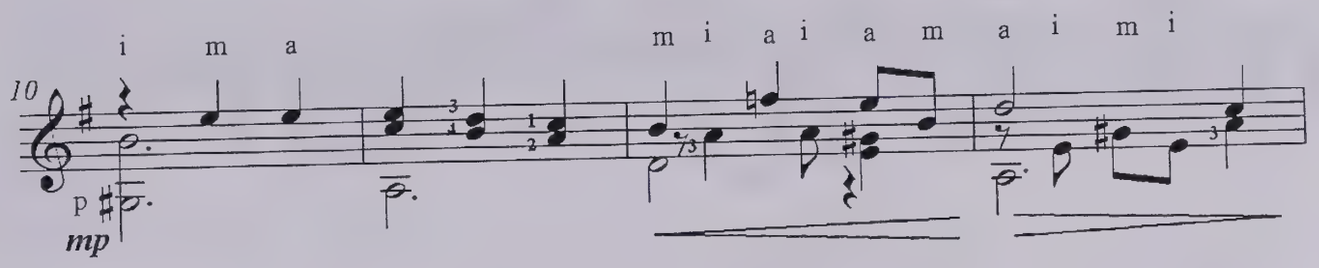
quarter note	8th note	16th note	32nd note	half note	whole note

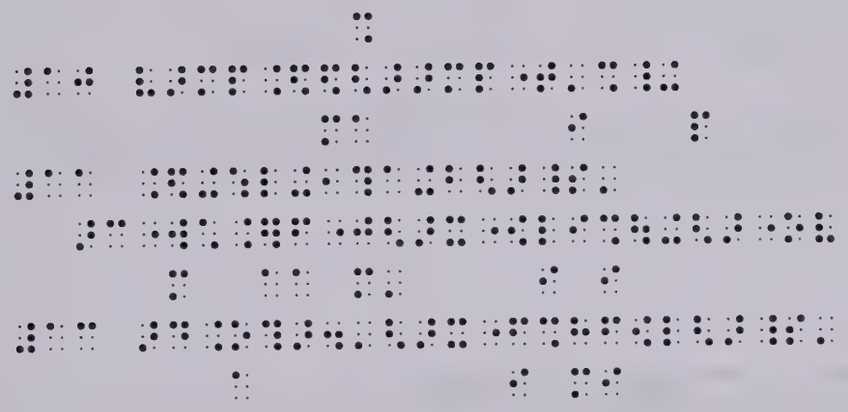
The stem sign always represents the larger of the note's two values (or the same value). The sign is often used for sustained bass notes in guitar music. The sign follows the brailled note and any dot, fingering, tie, slur, or other sign that applies to that note. The stem sign itself can be dotted, tied, or slurred. Pima fingering is written under the note, not the stem sign. The transcriber must decide when an in-accord should be used instead of a stem sign, especially for clarity of a melody line.

Right-hand fingering continued

Where pima fingering is given for part, but not all, of the music, the additional braille line is introduced temporarily to accommodate the letters. If some lines require the added pima line and others do not, it is suggested that a new segment with a measure number be started after any line containing pima fingering.

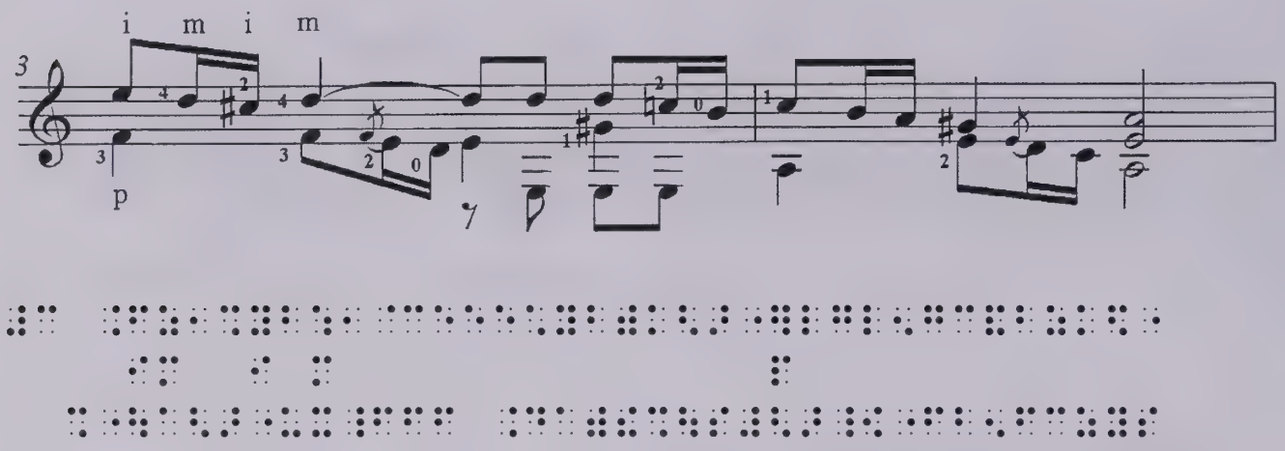
Example 4





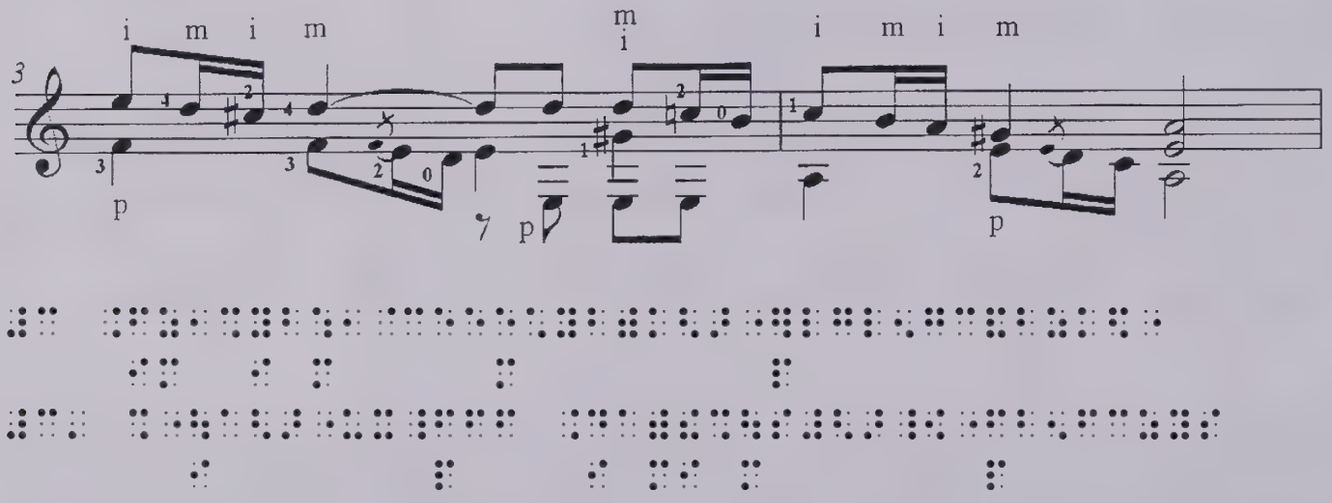
A long measure can be divided at an appropriate place (between whole beats or at an in-accord) and continued on the next line of a segment. However, a long measure including some pima fingering can be brailled with a portion of the music line in a continuing segment only when one braille line of music has pima fingering and the other line does not.

Example 5

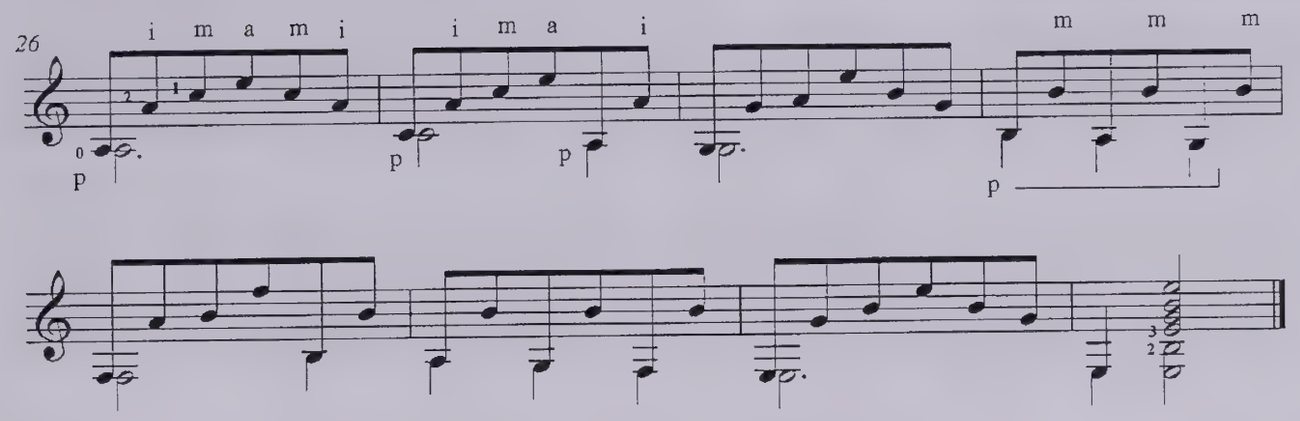


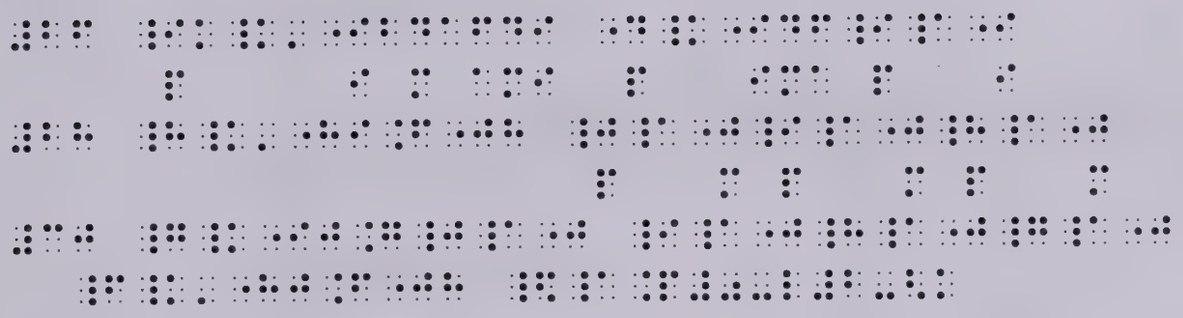
If both music lines of a divided measure will have pima fingering, the measure must be divided into two numbered segments.

Example 6



Example 7



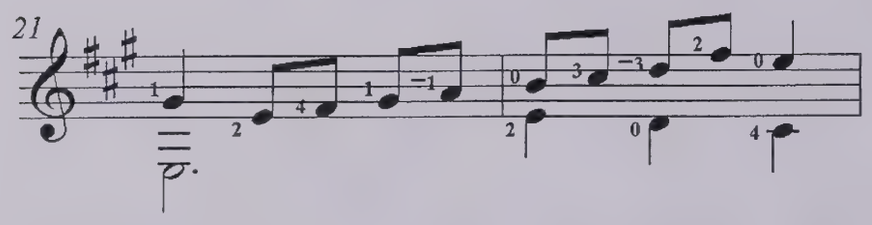


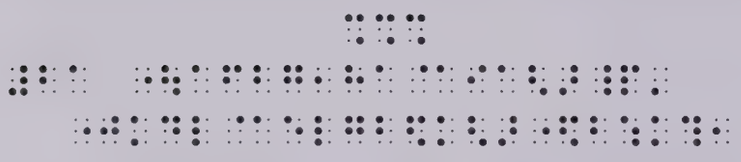
Shifts, slides, glides

The guitarist has two options for moving from one note to another on the same string: a left-hand finger can lift and move quietly to the next note, or the finger can remain held down and glide to the next note. In the latter case, a short dash or line is printed before, after, or between the finger numbers or note heads.

The braille music sign for a single shift (portamento) between two consecutive notes is dots 4,1 ⠸⠠ placed immediately after the finger number at the beginning of the shift, even though the print may show the dash associated with the second note. A shift sign may occur in print without finger numbers as simply a dash between notes. In this case, the single shift sign is still placed after the note that begins the shift.

Example 8



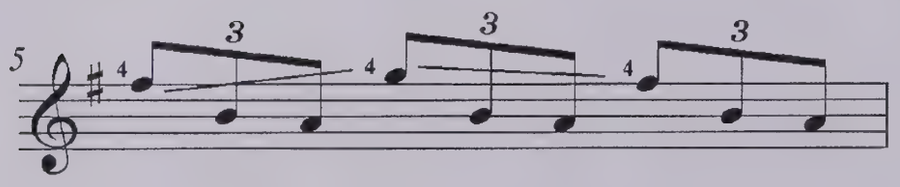


If the notes are not immediately adjacent, two signs are needed for the opening and closing of the shift. If the shift occurs between several notes, the opening and closing signs should be restated between each pair of notes in the continuing shift.

opening shift sign ⠸⠠⠄ placed after the opening finger number

closing shift sign ⠄⠸⠠ placed before the last note to be fingered

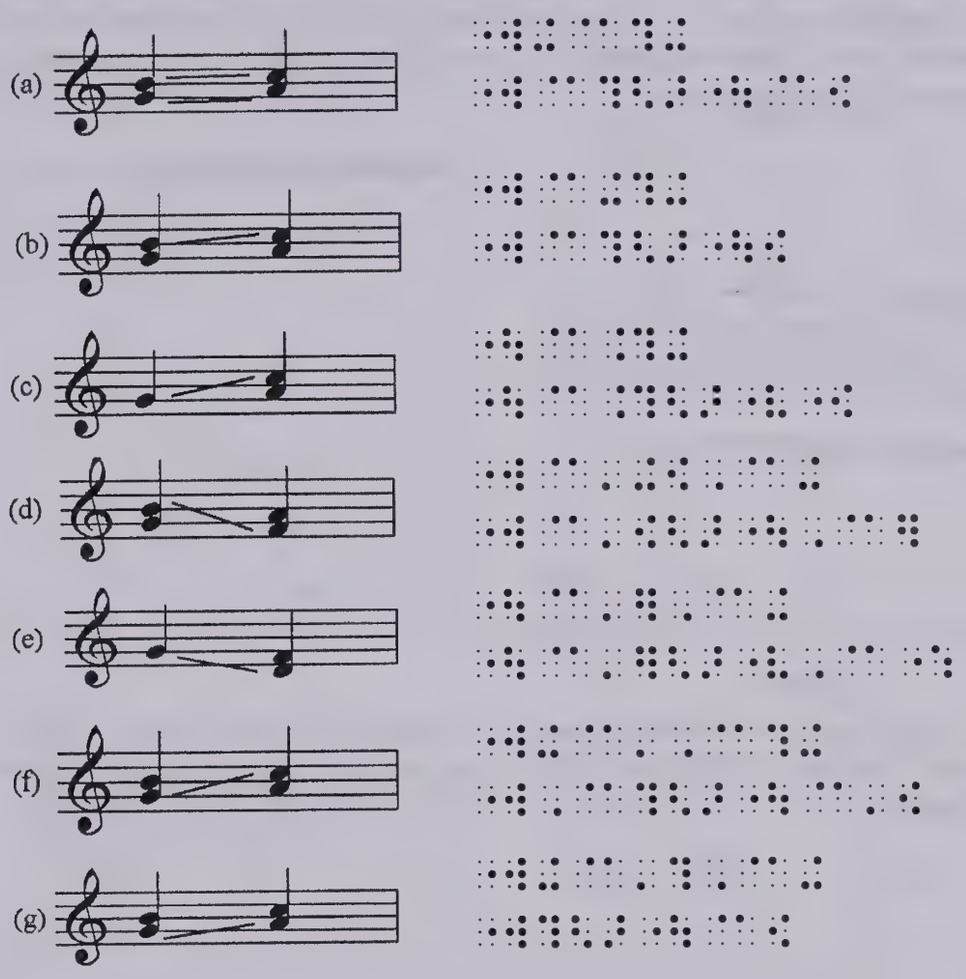
Example 9



The opening and closing shift signs may also be needed when notes are separated by an in-accord, by notes and intervals in chords, or by a page turn.

Each of the following possible sorts of shifts is illustrated first brailled as intervals and then as an in-accord.

Example 10

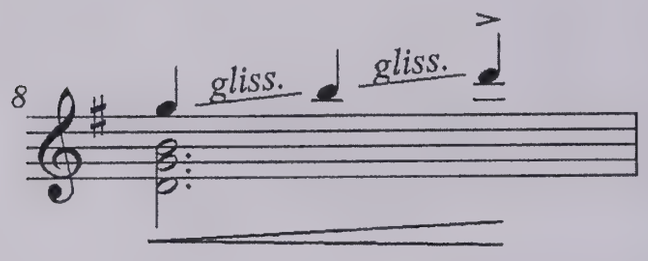


Glissandos

A glissando is a slide from one note to another on the same string, sounding all of the intervening notes as a rapid scale. Usually the first and last notes of a glissando are printed and a slanted or wavy line represents the intermediate notes. If the word "glissando" or abbreviation does not appear in print, the transcription will simply show a shift.

A glissando is brailled the same as a shift, except that the abbreviation "gliss." (with a dot 3 period) is inserted after the beginning note of the glissando, before the shift sign. The abbreviation "gliss." is used regardless of how the word is shown in print. The note following the shift sign requires an octave mark because of the presence of the word sign.

Example 11

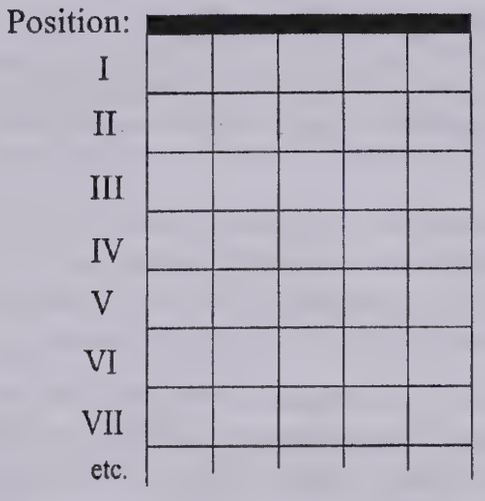


If the glissando is executed over a wider range of notes, and a time interval that is difficult to make clear, refer to paragraph 23.14.1 in MBC-97 for examples of how to show it with a footnote and transcriber's note.

Strings and positions

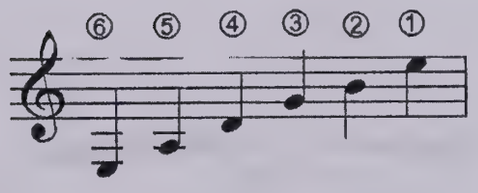
A standard guitar has six strings, numbered from 1 (fifth octave E) to 6 (third octave E) and 18 to 19 frets on the fingerboard. A "position" refers to the placement of the index finger of the left hand on any given fret and then playing the notes within reach of the other three fingers (i.e., if the 1st finger is placed on the 5th fret [V], the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers can play the notes on the 6th–8th frets).

Table 3



Positions

I VIII
II IX
III X
IV XI
V XII
VI
VII

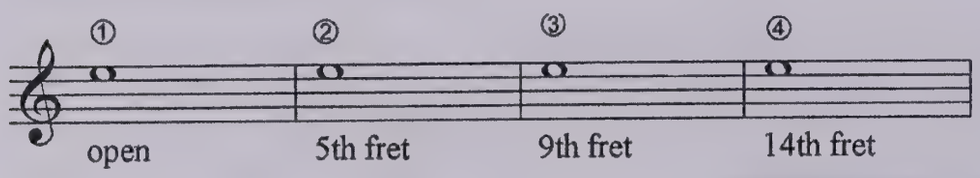


Strings:

① 1st ④ 4th
② 2nd ⑤ 5th
③ 3rd ⑥ 6th

String signs

Each fret on the guitar represents a half step (minor 2nd interval), and the 12th fret is the perfect octave above the open string. The tuning of the guitar makes it possible to produce the same note on several different strings. A string number is used to indicate where the note is to be played and is usually indicated in print with a circled number: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

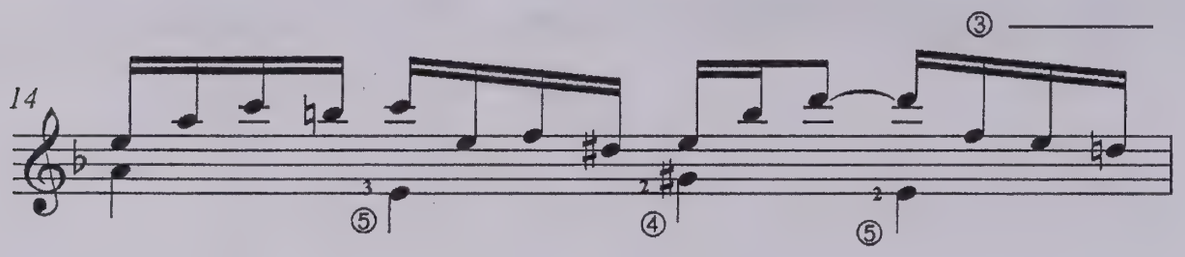


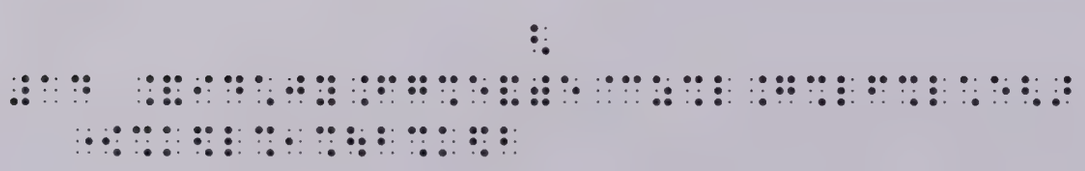
The braille indication for the string number is a two-cell sign: the string prefix (⠸), followed immediately by the string-number sign. (The string-number signs are the same braille characters as the finger-number signs.)

The string sign precedes a note and its octave sign or accidental, articulation, ornamentation, or a triplet or irregular-grouping sign, but follows an opening bracket slur, word-sign expression, or a position sign. No special octave mark is required for the note following a string sign. *Note that the placement of a string sign in the order of signs is different for plucked instruments than it is for bowed instruments.*

If the print shows a continuation line for a given string, the string sign can be doubled (the second half of the sign is written twice) if four or more consecutive notes are on the same string. ⠸⠸⠸ ⠸⠸⠸ The doubling is terminated by restating the string sign (with a single string number) before the last note affected.

Example 12





Position signs

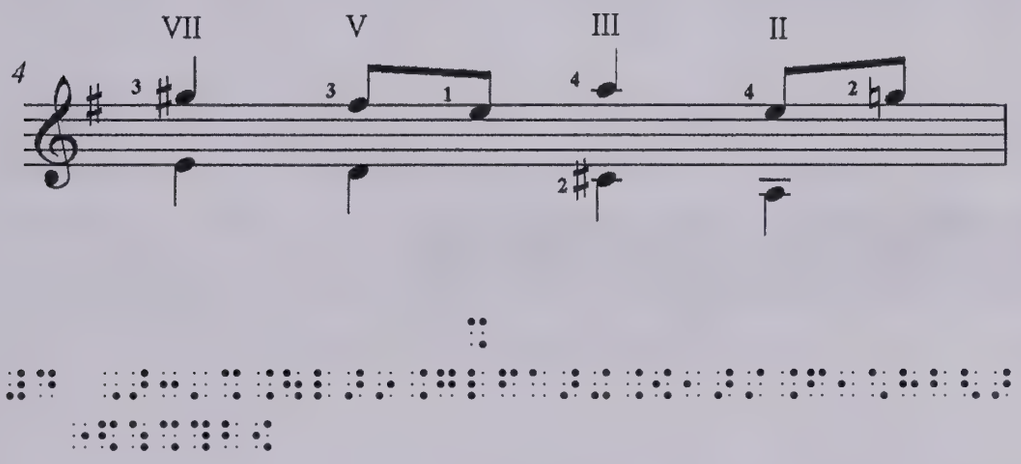
String signs usually appear in conjunction with position signs since the notes are produced above the first position. The terms *positions* and *frets* (fret-positions) are used interchangeably. In print, roman numerals are most often used when numbering positions, but arabic numerals are sometimes found, particularly in conjunction with barrés.

A position indication, like a string sign, is brailled as a two-cell sign: the position prefix, the same braille character as a word-sign, followed immediately by the fret number. Note that position VII is preceded by a dot 6 to avoid confusion with the termination sign for a hairpin crescendo.

A dot 3 is added at the end of the position's number when the first braille character after a position sign contains dots 1, 2, or 3. The first note after a position sign requires an octave mark. (The position-number signs are related to the signs for intervals. There being no interval sign for a unison, the indication for first position consists of two successive position prefix signs.)

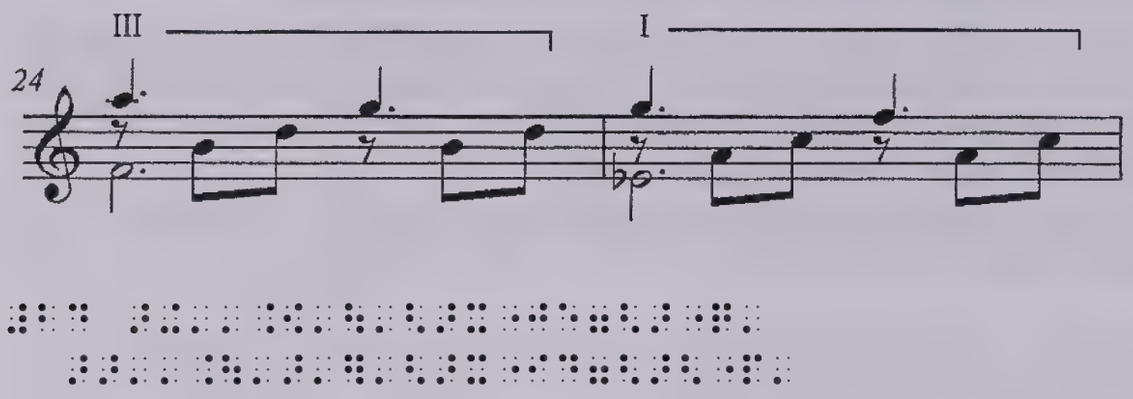
When a measure contains in-accords, the position sign(s) are brailled only in the first in-accord part, even when they precede rests.

Example 13

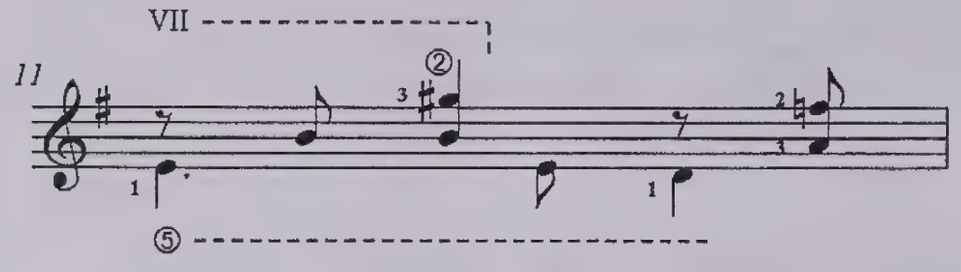


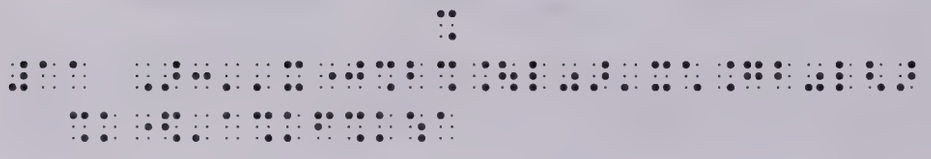
If position signs have lines of continuation (appearing in print as solid or dotted lines), the lines and their terminations are shown only in the first in-accord part. A line of continuation is indicated initially by two dot 3s placed immediately after the position sign, and finally by a position sign and a single dot 3 preceding the last note to be played in that position. However, if a new position indication immediately follows the end of the line of continuation, that new position obviously terminates the previous one, so there is no need for the end sign.

Example 14



Example 15

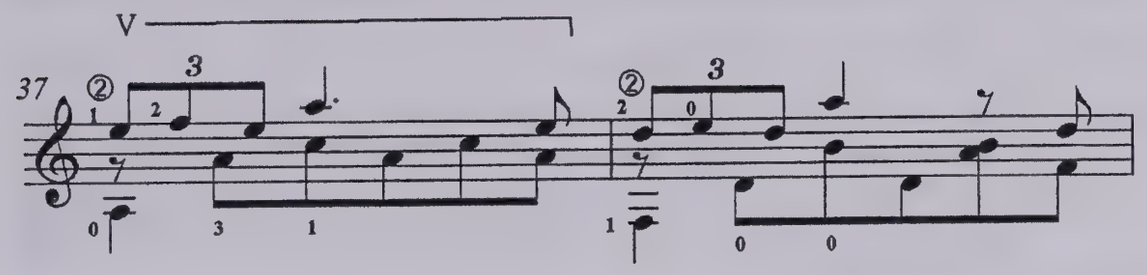


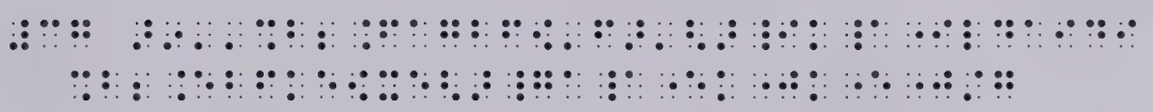


String signs and positions signs often appear together in guitar music. The position sign is normally brailled before the string sign when they appear together before a note. Logically, the guitarist's hand must be in a certain position *before* fingering the strings.

The bass notes in the example below are brailled as quarter note stem signs by replacing the eighth note rests with eighth notes in unison with the bass notes. This practice eliminates the need for a third in-accord and should only be done in a non-facsimile transcription.

Example 16





Barré

A barré (or simply bar in plain English) is produced by placing the first finger of the left hand across a fret on the fingerboard and simultaneously pressing down all or a few strings. For instance, if playing in the fifth (V) position, the first finger acts as a "bar" across the fifth fret, and the other fingers are free to play notes on the sixth or seventh frets; notes required on the fifth fret are already pressed.

The barré is simply a modification of a position and therefore the braille follows all of the procedures associated with the position sign: the first note following a barré must have an octave mark; a barré should be placed in the first in-accord part only; and a barré may be written with lines of continuation.

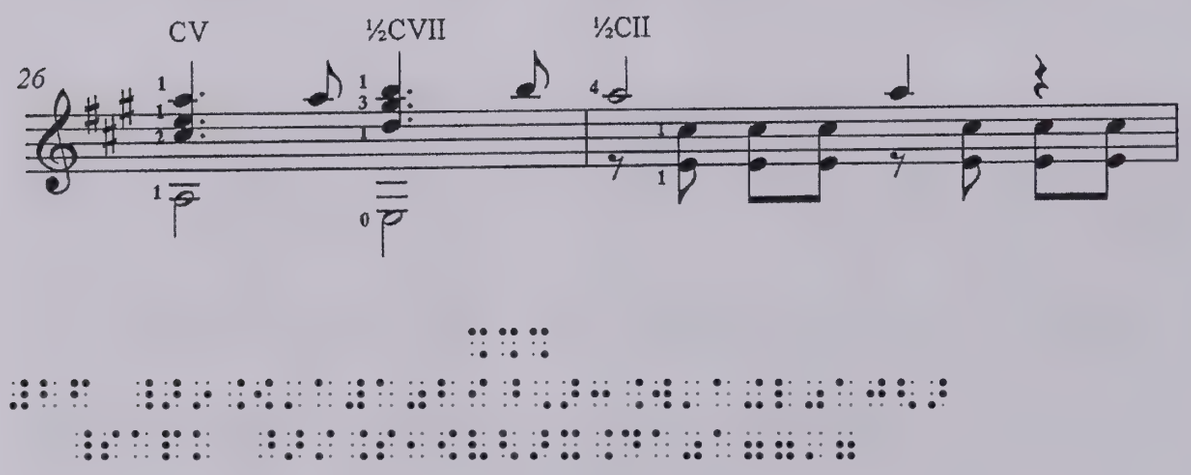
There are two ways a barré may be indicated in print. (1) It may be shown *above the staff* with letters, and sometimes fractions, preceding the position number. (2) Otherwise, it may be shown *on the staff* by a vertical bracket placed before a note or chord and a position number written above the staff. Each way requires a special sign that precedes the position prefix.

Barréd positions

The barré can be placed across all the strings (full or grand barré) or across fewer than six strings (partial barré). Print indicators for a full barré or partial barré vary from publisher to publisher. The roman letters **C** or **B** are the most commonly used signs for a full barré (**C** = Capotasto or Cejilla for "capo" and **B** = Barré) The letters are written before a position roman numeral (CIV, BII, C.IV, B.II,) or the cardinal number representing the position (C4, B2). A partial barré is indicated by a fraction before the letter or roman numeral (½C, ¾B, ½V, ¼II, P.B., etc.), or by a diagonal slash through the letters. The letters and/or numbers are not included in the braille. Instead, the braille sign for a full barré or partial barré is placed immediately before the position sign.

Full barré ⠶ Partial barré ⠒

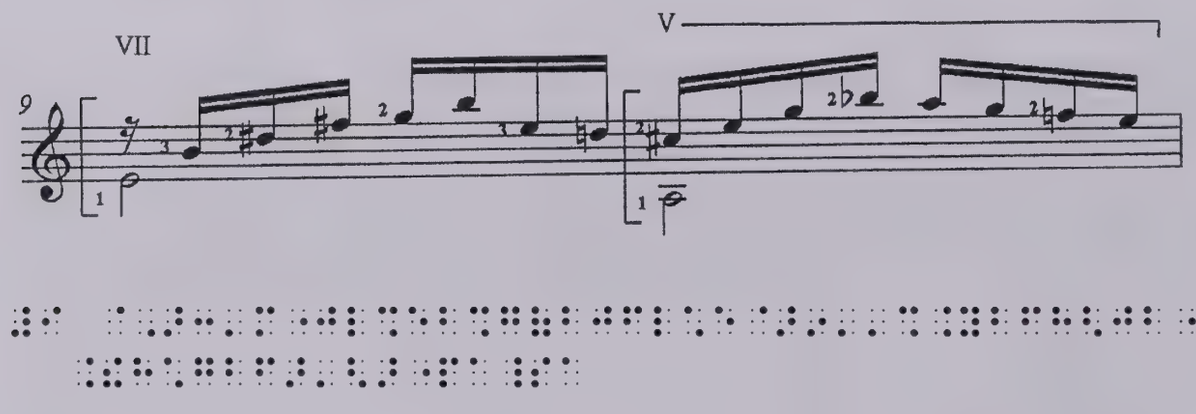
Example 17



Vertical bracket barré

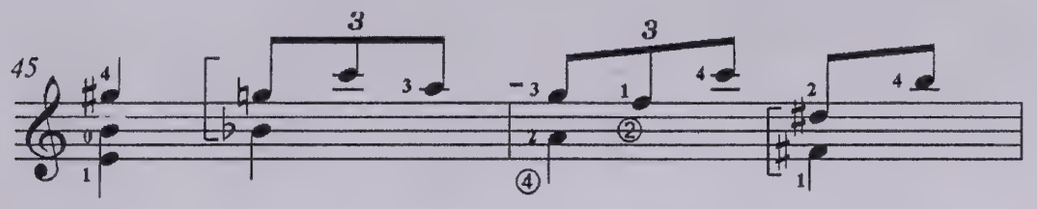
A full or partial barré can be indicated in print by a vertical bracket (solid line or dotted line). When the bracket is used, a dot 4 is inserted before the position sign for either a full or partial barré.

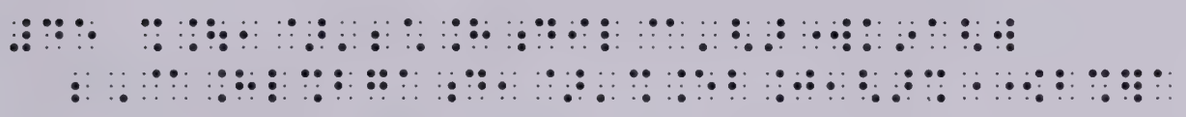
Example 18



When the vertical bracket appears in print without a position number, the dot 4 bracket sign is followed by the position sign prefix ⠸ and no number is required.

Example 19

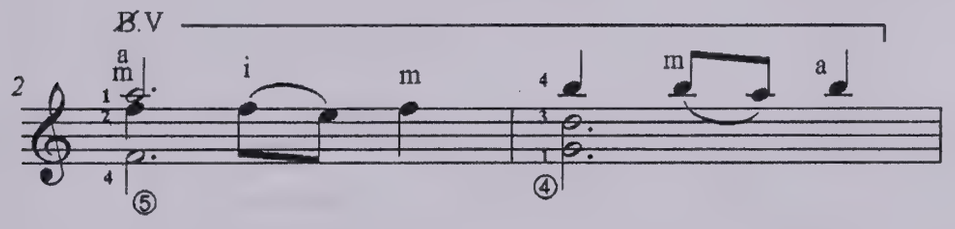


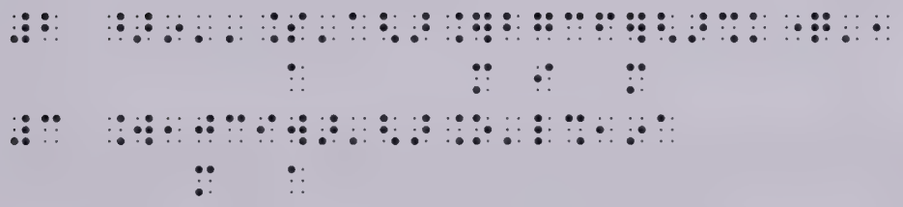


If a full or partial barré position (½C, B.II, etc.) and a vertical bracket appear together in print, the bracket barré is not used.

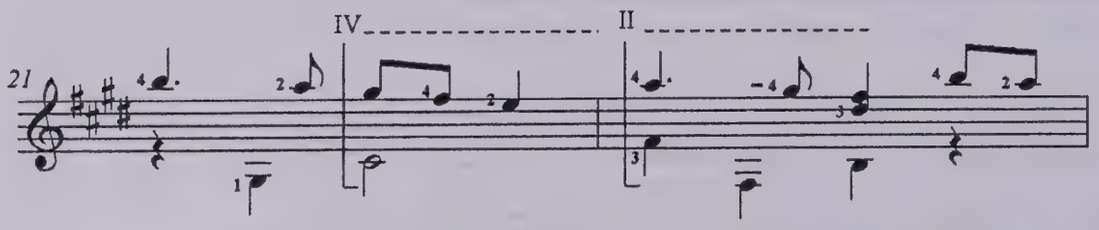
The following three examples illustrate barrés and vertical brackets, and various ways in which they might appear in print.

Example 20

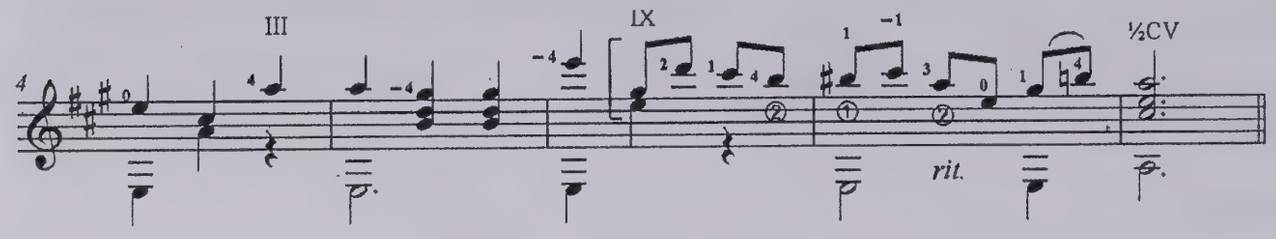


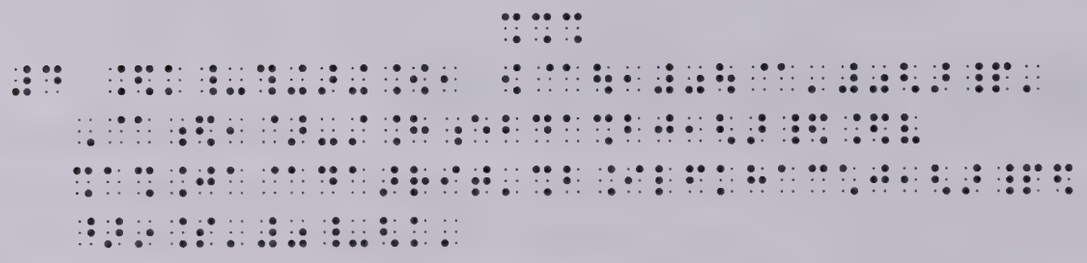


Example 21



Example 22





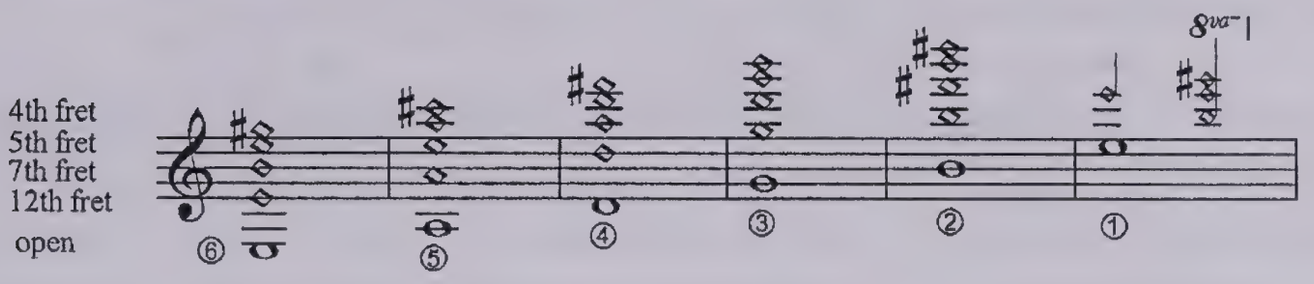
Harmonics

Harmonics present a challenge to the braille transcriber of music for stringed instruments. Publishers differ in the way harmonics are shown in print, and the transcriber often needs to know the pitches of the open strings of each instrument in order to make an accurate transcription. When in doubt, try faithfully to show what is in the print, and hope that the guitarist will forgive and remedy any errors.

Natural harmonics

A natural harmonic is a bell-like tone produced on the guitar by lightly touching an *open string* with the left hand finger at an exact subdivision of the total string length, plucking the string with the right hand and then immediately taking the left hand away. The 12th fret is at exactly half of the string length and produces a pitch an octave above the open string. The 7th fret is at exactly a quarter of the string length and sounds an octave plus a 5th above the open string. The chart below illustrates the most commonly used natural harmonics.

Table 4: Natural harmonics produced on open strings



Artificial harmonics

Artificial harmonics (also referred to as "octave harmonics" or "right hand harmonics") are not produced on open strings. Instead, the right hand index finger touches the string at exactly 12 frets above any note that is stopped by the left hand. At the same time, the harmonic, bell-like note is produced by plucking the string with the "a" or ring finger of the right hand. Since any note can be played as an artificial harmonic, the notes often appear as a melody or scale, whereas natural harmonics are usually used as isolated notes or chords. A natural harmonic can be included in a passage of artificial harmonics, but then it is executed as an artificial harmonic using the right hand index finger.

Music publishers often make a distinction between the two types of harmonics by showing a diamond-shaped note head for an artificial harmonic and a regular note head with a small circle above it for a natural harmonic. Usually the word "harmonic," the abbreviation "harm." or "arm" (an abbreviation for *armonico*, Spanish for "harmonic") or "art. harm" is printed above the note. Modern publishers normally use the diamond-shaped notes for all harmonics, and often omit the word or abbreviation.

In braille, the abbreviation "arm." or "art. arm." is transcribed—no matter how it appears in print—and precedes all the other signs before the harmonic notes or intervals. It is wise to insert the abbreviation "arm." even if it does not appear in print for passages with diamond-shaped notes. It is not then necessary to use a special marking to show the diamond shape of the note.

Transcribing natural harmonics

The note head of the natural harmonic note often has a small zero above it indicating the open string, but a finger number can also appear, indicating which finger is used to create the harmonic.

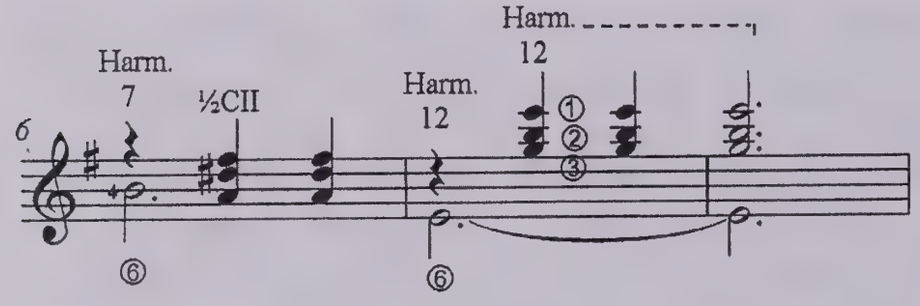
Natural harmonic sign ⠒

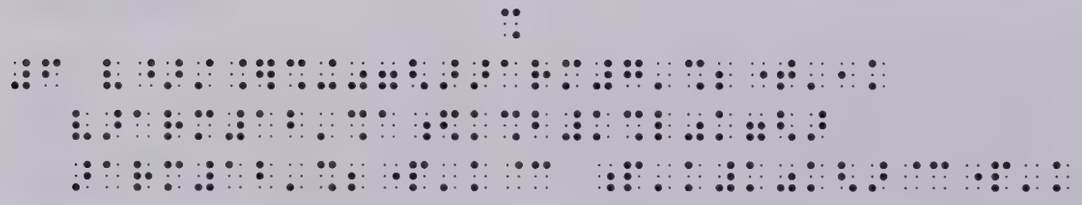
In braille, every natural harmonic note or interval is followed by the natural harmonic sign (dots 1,3). If the note is also fingered with a number other than zero, the natural harmonic sign follows that fingering number. The natural harmonic sign may be doubled for a series of four or more consecutive harmonics, either for notes or intervals, but the intervals themselves should not be doubled within the same passage.

The harmonic fret number (12, 7, 5 etc.) may or may not also appear, indicating which fret produces the harmonic. If roman numerals are used instead of cardinal numbers, convert the numerals into numbers since this is indicating frets and not positions. The string number may or may not be shown in print.

The abbreviation "arm." with a dot 3 period is transcribed first. If a harmonic fret number is given, the abbreviation and fret number are combined into a single expression. The fret number is brailled with a number sign after "arm" and *before* the dot 3 period, with no spaces. The string sign comes next (if present), followed by the note, which must have an octave sign and must be followed by the natural harmonic sign.

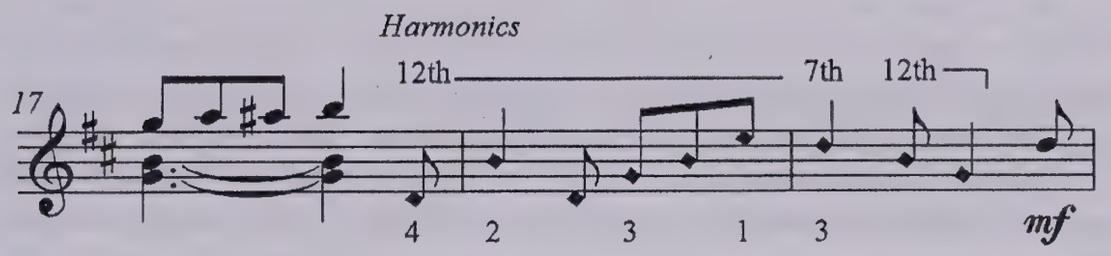
Example 23

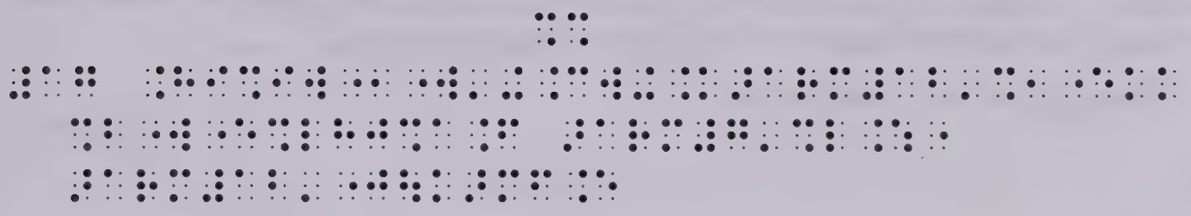




In the next example, diamond-shaped notes have been used in print for open string natural harmonics. The string numbers appear beneath the note heads, without circles. Remember that the fret numbers (12th, 7th) are not position signs. The word "arm." needs to be repeated for the change of frets in the last measure but does not interrupt the doubling of the natural harmonic sign, which is terminated by writing the sign after the last harmonic note in the melody.

Example 24





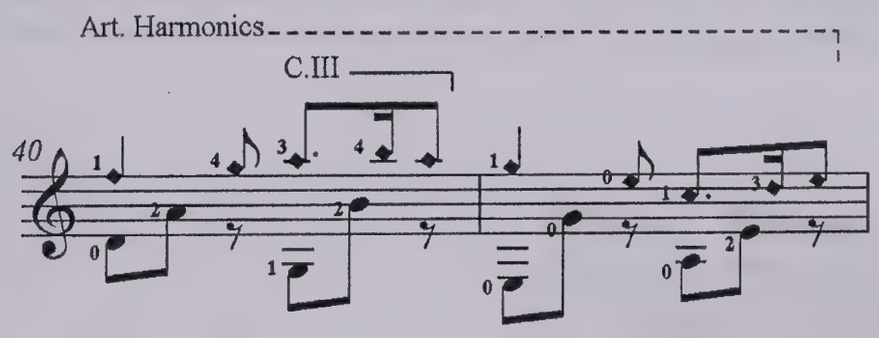
Transcribing artificial harmonics

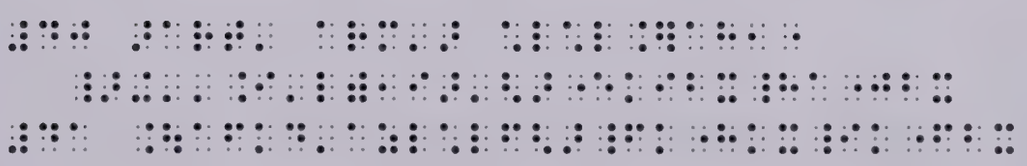
In braille, artificial harmonic notes are preceded by the word-sign expression "art. arm."—beginning and ending with word signs and using dot 3 periods.

Artificial Harmonic sign

The sign precedes every artificial harmonic note and an accidental or octave sign associated with the note. The sign may be doubled (restating the complete sign) for four or more consecutive notes. *Note that this doubling is not permitted in music for bowed string instruments.*

Example 25





Arpeggios and rasgueados

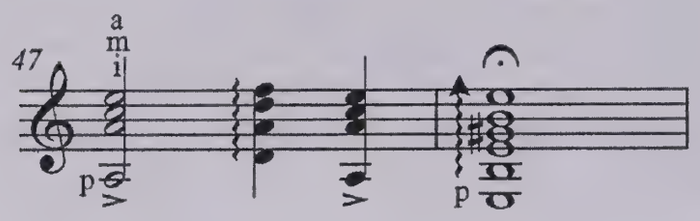
Arpeggios

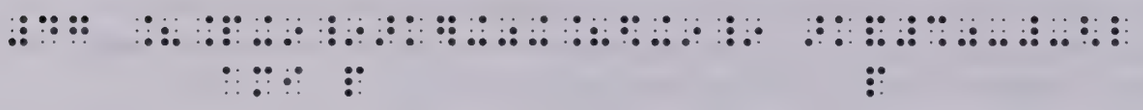
An arpeggio is a broken chord where each note is played individually from the lowest note to the highest. In print, the arpeggio is shown with a wavy line or a wavy up-arrow line. The arpeggio can be performed by using the individual fingers of the right hand, or by using the thumb to play each note separately. An arpeggio is usually played more slowly than the quick, "ripped" broken chord of the rasgueado, described next.

In braille, the standard arpeggio sign is placed before the chord and all signs of expression (accent, staccato, etc.), octave sign and accidental associated with the top note of the chord.

Arpeggio (or "up-arrow") sign: ⠸⠸

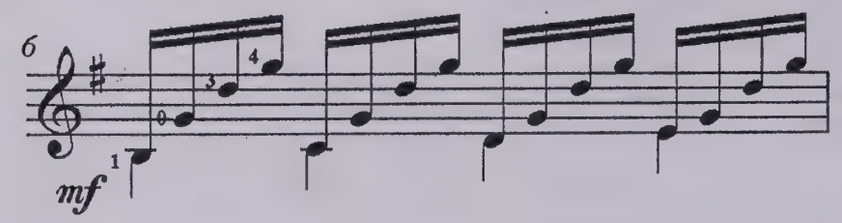
Example 26





"Arpeggio" is also the term used for guitar music where notes of a chord are played rhythmically under or above a melody line. In this case, the notes are transcribed as shown in print. Stem signs are very useful for emphasizing the bass melody in this arpeggio figure, but some transcribers may prefer to use an in-accord.

Example 27



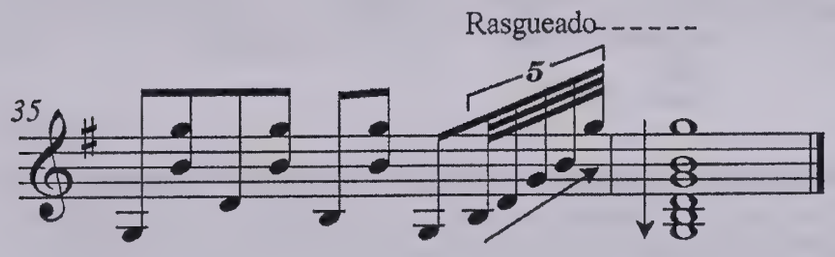
Rasgueado

The rasgueado (from the Spanish *rasgar*—"to rip") is also a broken chord, but the individual notes may be played from the bottom up or the top down—with an individual finger or several fingers. In print, a rasgueado is often shown as individual notes rather than as a chord. The word "rasgueado" or abbreviation "rasg." may or may not appear in print, and an arrow (straight or wavy) may indicate the direction the notes are to be played.

In braille, if the word "rasgueado" in any form appears in print, the abbreviation "rasg." (dot 3 period) is brailled before the arpeggio sign.

"up-arrow" rasgueado sign: ⠜⠅
"down-arrow" rasgueado sign: ⠜⠅⠅

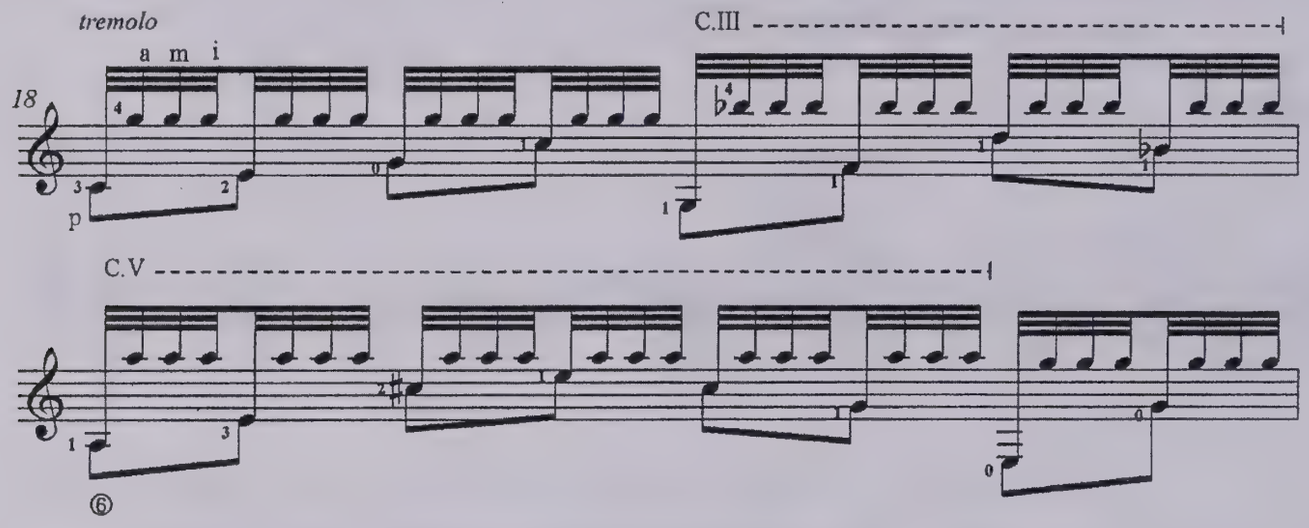
Example 28

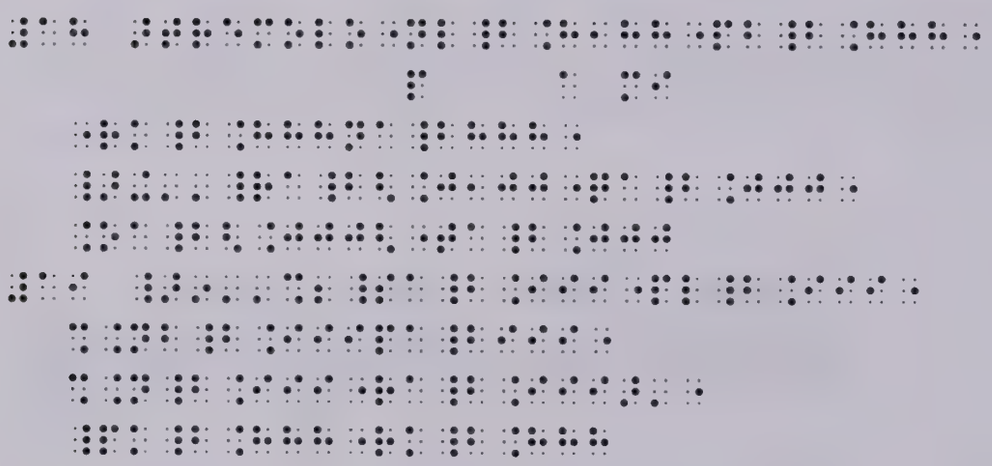


Tremolo

A tremolo is the rapid repetition of a note on the same string—played fast enough to sound like a continuous pitch. It is played with the right hand fingers—the thumb (p) plays a bass note. A four-note tremolo is the most common and is usually fingered p, a, m, i. There is no special braille sign for the guitar tremolo because the notes are written out rather than being abbreviated with two notes and tremolo bars. The stem sign is recommended for the bass note of a tremolo, and the sign does not interrupt the grouping of notes. Lines in each segment are divided on whole beats for clarity.

Example 29





Some special effects

Free stroke and rest stroke

These are right hand techniques for playing the strings. A free stroke brushes across the string, whereas a rest stroke (*apoyando*) "pulls" across the string and rests on the adjacent lower string, producing a rich, full-bodied sound. The signs used for the strokes may vary and are usually found in method books rather than performance pieces, but the most common are a u-shape above the note head for a free stroke and a v-shape for the rest stroke. It is suggested that transcribers use the violin bowing signs for up-bow (free stroke) and down bow (rest stroke).

Bends, pull-offs, hammers

These are left hand techniques for playing ascending and descending slurs and changing the pitch of a note by "bending" the string on the fingerboard. All can be transcribed as ordinary slurs with the addition of descriptive words as they are found in the print.

Tunings

Some classic guitar music requires the player to tune the sixth string down a step to "D." This "scordatura" is usually indicated at the beginning of the first measure as: Ü = D. It is suggested that the phrase "Sixth string equals D" be transcribed in literary braille, after the title and above the music heading. Follow print for other wording when necessary. If all the strings are re-tuned, such as "tuning: D G D G B E"—follow print and use the letter sign for the note names.

Percussion Music

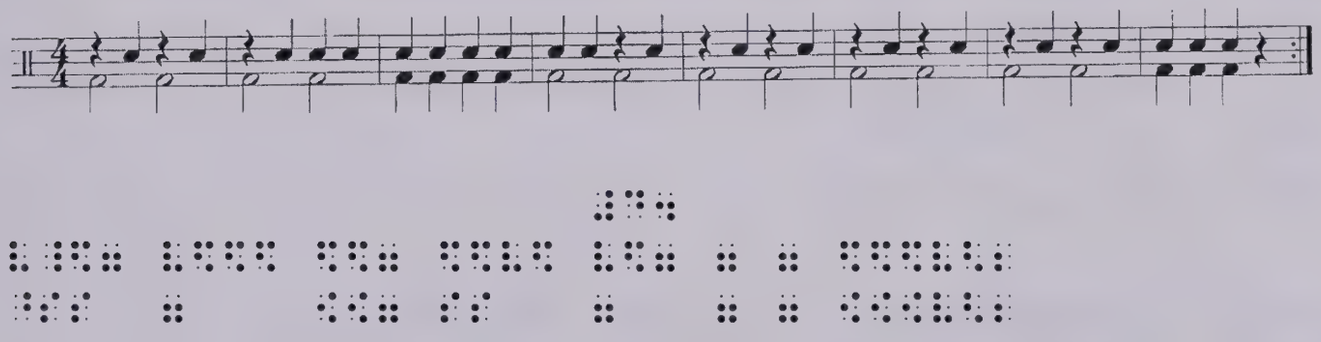
General format for percussion parts

Typically, the percussion section of a band or orchestra does not assign the individual instruments to the players until the composition is in rehearsal. Until then, even the number of required percussionists may be undetermined. Consequently, percussion parts are usually printed in a score arrangement on one staff or a system of staves or lines, and multiple copies of the score are given to all of the players.

To transcribe such a score into braille, use a full open-score presentation with a separate braille line for each instrument, even if several have been printed on one staff. Align the measures vertically in a simplified bar-over-bar format. Preserve the vertical arrangement of the print, with the lowest note on the staff being brailled on the lowest line of the parallel. Leave a blank line between parallels; two blank lines are not necessary, as they would be in a typical ensemble score. Assign the relevant note name for each unpitched instrument as it were in bass clef. If a part has been printed on a single line or a staff of fewer than five lines, you may choose arbitrary note names for the instruments. An explanatory statement should be placed at the beginning of a piece or on the Transcriber's Notes page of each volume, stating the note which represents each part.

The music for the bass drum is almost always printed in the first space of the bass staff, and that for the snare drum in the third space. In braille, therefore, the note A (second octave) is normally used for the bass drum part and the note E (third octave) for the snare-drum part.

Example 1

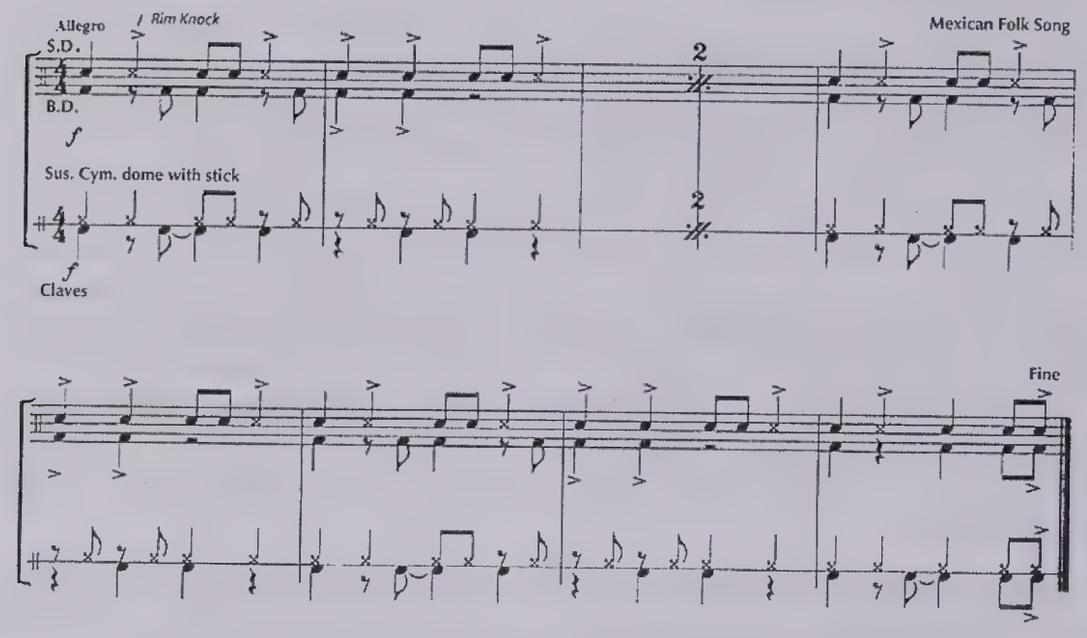


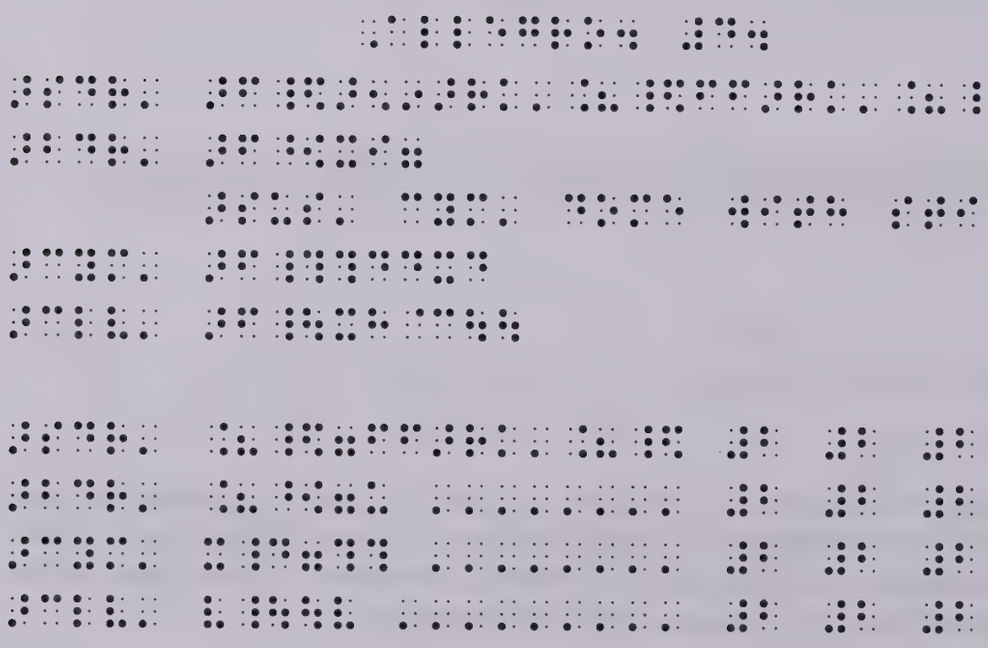
If only two, three or four parts are being shown throughout, each with its specific note, and no other parts are being introduced, the notes will adequately identify the parts. However, if the same note must be used for more than one instrument, an appropriate abbreviation, introduced by a word sign and followed by a dot 3, is necessary each time the meaning of the note is reassigned.

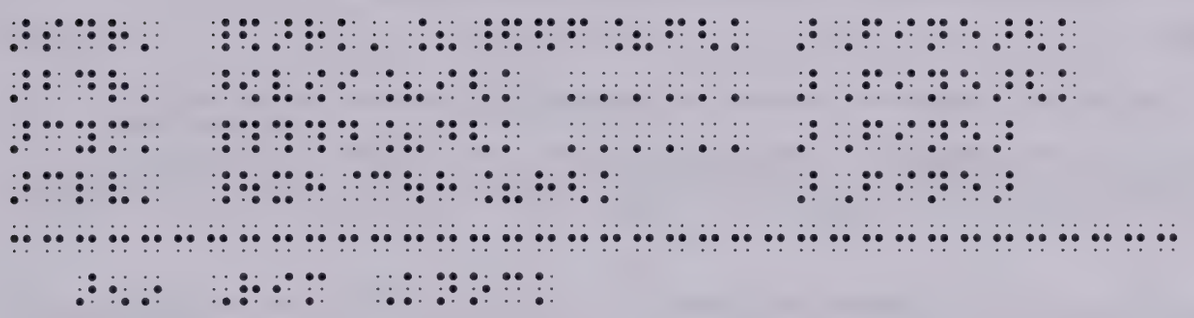
Octave marks

The usual rules regarding octave signs do not pertain to unpitched percussion music. Show an octave mark only at the beginning of the piece, at the beginning of each new parallel, after a word-sign expression, and following an in-accord sign. It is not necessary to re-mark the octave following a numeral repeat.

Example 2



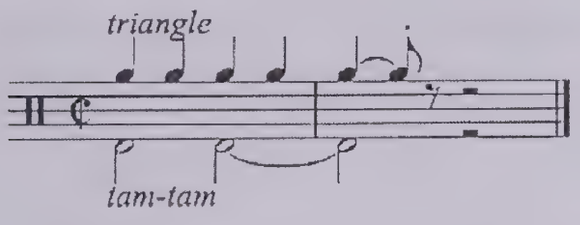




Ties versus slurs

In print the shape of a single slur is the same as the shape of a tie. In percussion music, if the second of two connected notes has a marking of any kind (an accent or staccato, a hand sign or a new dynamic etc.) it is, by definition, a slur.

Example 3

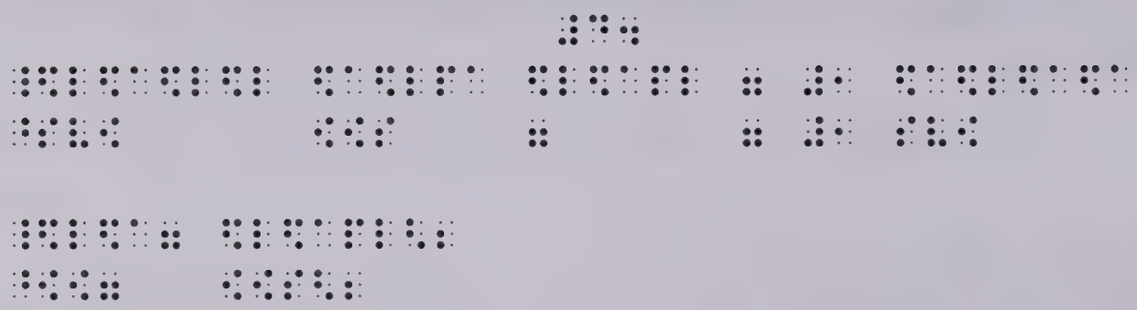


Hand signs

A hand sign is brailled immediately after the note, as a fingering mark is shown in other music.

Right hand: ⠇ Left hand: ⠁

Example 4



Braille repeats

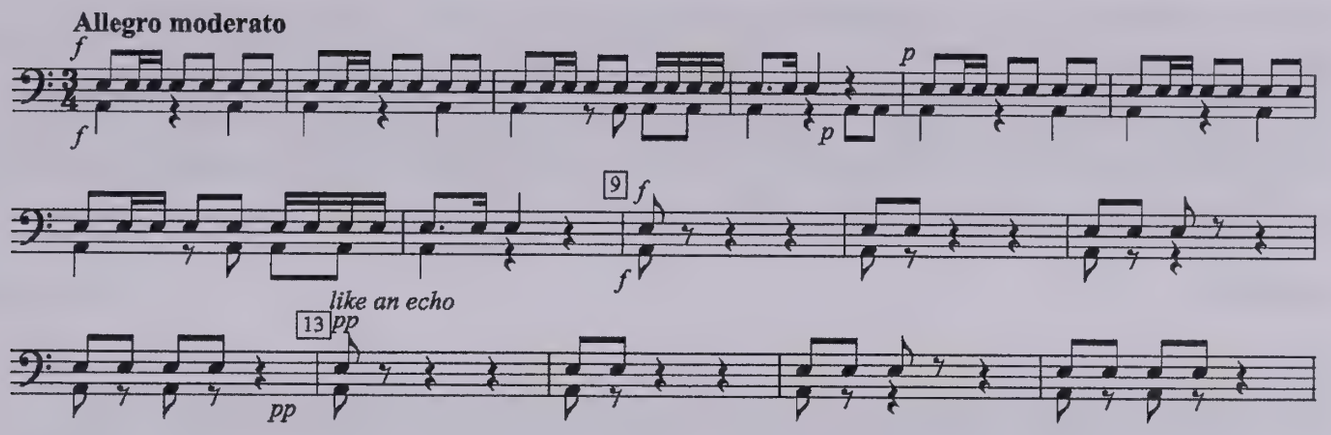
Measure repeats, and forward- and backward-numeral repeats, may be used extensively. Part-measure repeats should be used with caution. In method books for beginning drummers, where drum rolls and specific strokes are being presented, part-measure repeats should not be used except in the most obvious cases.

The usual rules may be relaxed to allow for liberal use of numeral repeat signs. It is not required that the original measure and the repetition occur on the same line of braille.

Measure and rehearsal numbers

Measure numbers may be shown, if desired, but generally rehearsal numbers are present and closely spaced; in that case, they can effectively serve as reference points. A rehearsal reference mark or measure number is placed between word signs in a free line above the parallel, indented one cell to the right of the first cell of music text. If there is a word-sign expression at the same point, the reference mark is brailled above the expression. No other items should be placed on the line with the reference mark.

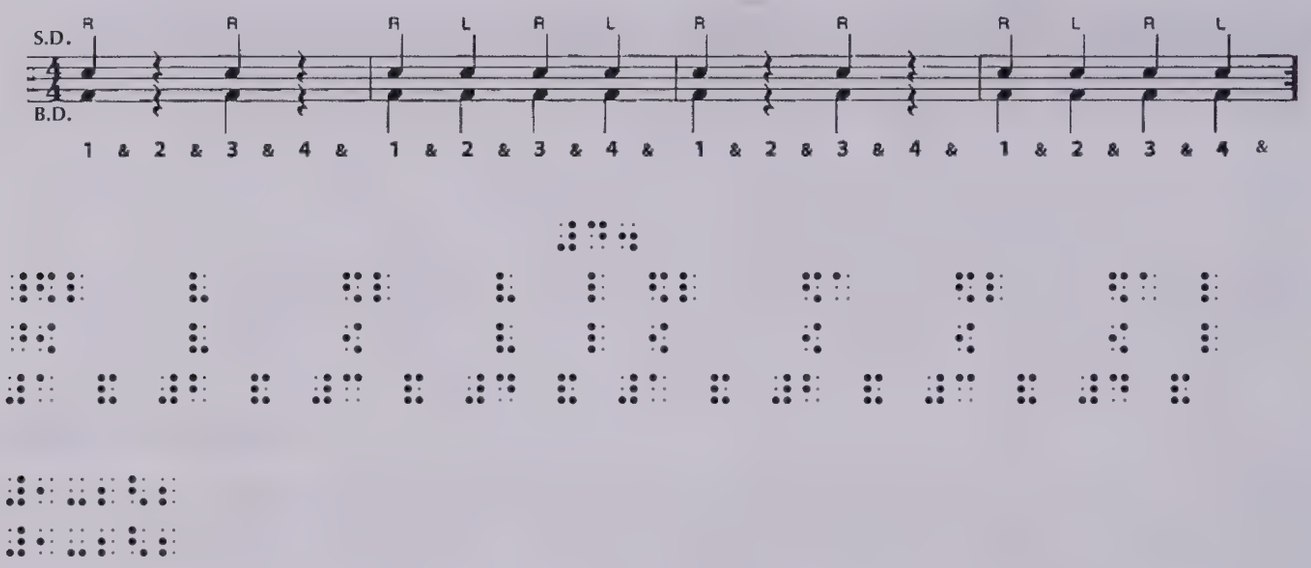
Example 5



Counting-numbers in beginning method books

Counting-numbers are often printed with the music to assist the student in learning the rhythms. These numbers are aligned with the notes and rests, below the lowest braille part of the parallel. One may use dot 5s to separate beats within the measures, or may use the (123) bar line for unusual circumstances to delimit measures. Which presentation is preferable depends on the lengths of the measures and the complexity of the music. In Example 6, the notes and rests have been spaced to align them above the numbers, and the special bar line sign has been employed.

Example 6



Special Order of Signs in Drum Parts

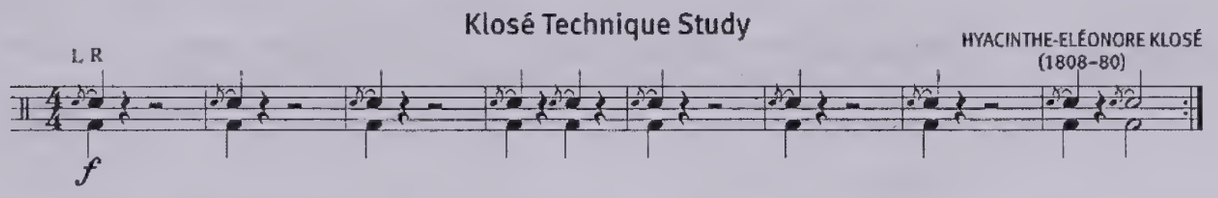
Word sign expression
Opening bracket slur
Appoggiatura prefix sign
Octave mark
Appoggiatura Note (flam)
Stroke number word-sign expression
Nuances
Octave mark
-- **Note** --
Dot
Interval
Hand sign(s)
Note Repetition (fractioning)
Fermata
Slur
Closing bracket slur
Tie
Glissando
Backward repeat sign
Music hyphen

Two-stick drumming techniques

The flam

In both print and braille, a flam is indicated as an appoggiatura. It is usually printed as a small-sized eighth note. A slanted slash may or may not appear across the stem; in either case, the plain appoggiatura sign (26) is used. A following slur, if there is one in the print, it omitted in braille; the braille appoggiatura slur is not required, and the mark should not be interpreted as a tie.

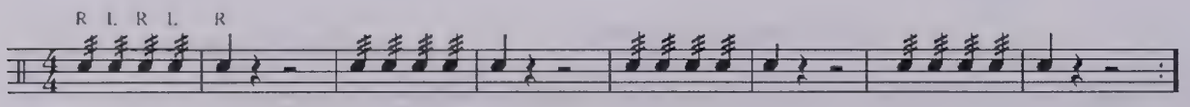
Example 7



Rolls

In both print and braille, rolls are indicated with note repetition (fractioning) signs. The values are determined in the print by the number of cross-bars shown on the stem of the note. Typically, three bars are shown, indicating 32nd fractioning, and the braille sign (45, 2) is used to indicate it. A 16th fractioning is shown by dots (45, 123). Beamed or flagged notes must be read carefully. Include the beams or flags in the sum of the cross-strokes. The fractioning sign is brailled after the note and after a hand sign, but before a tie or slur.

Example 8

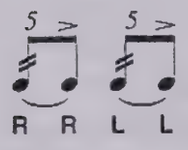


Double-stroke open-roll rudiments

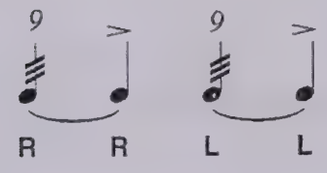
Sometimes a numeral is printed in conjunction with a roll sign, to indicate how many strokes are to be included in the roll. These numbers may easily be mistaken for irregular group indications. In the following three illustrations, the headings are the only clues that the "5", "9," and "11" do not indicate irregular groupings. The numeral should be brailled as a word-sign expression preceding the first note of the roll.

Example 9

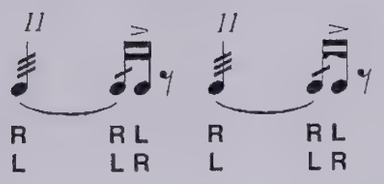
Five Stroke Roll



Nine Stroke Roll

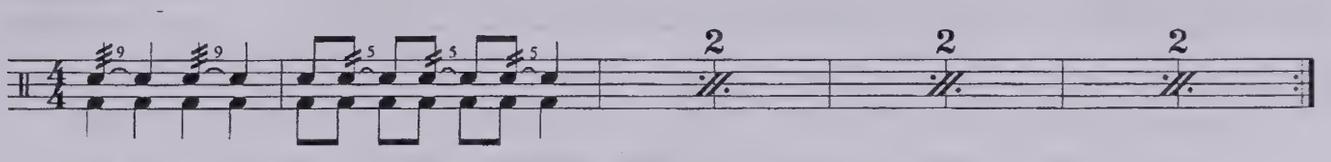


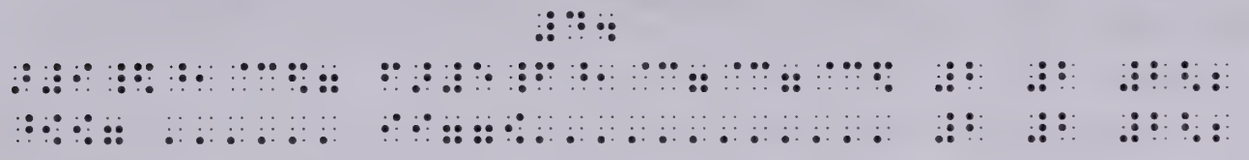
Eleven Stroke Roll



The "9" and "5" in the following illustration are more clearly positioned in the print than those in the preceding examples, and the transcriber will not mistake them for irregular value groupings.

Example 10





Ensemble scores

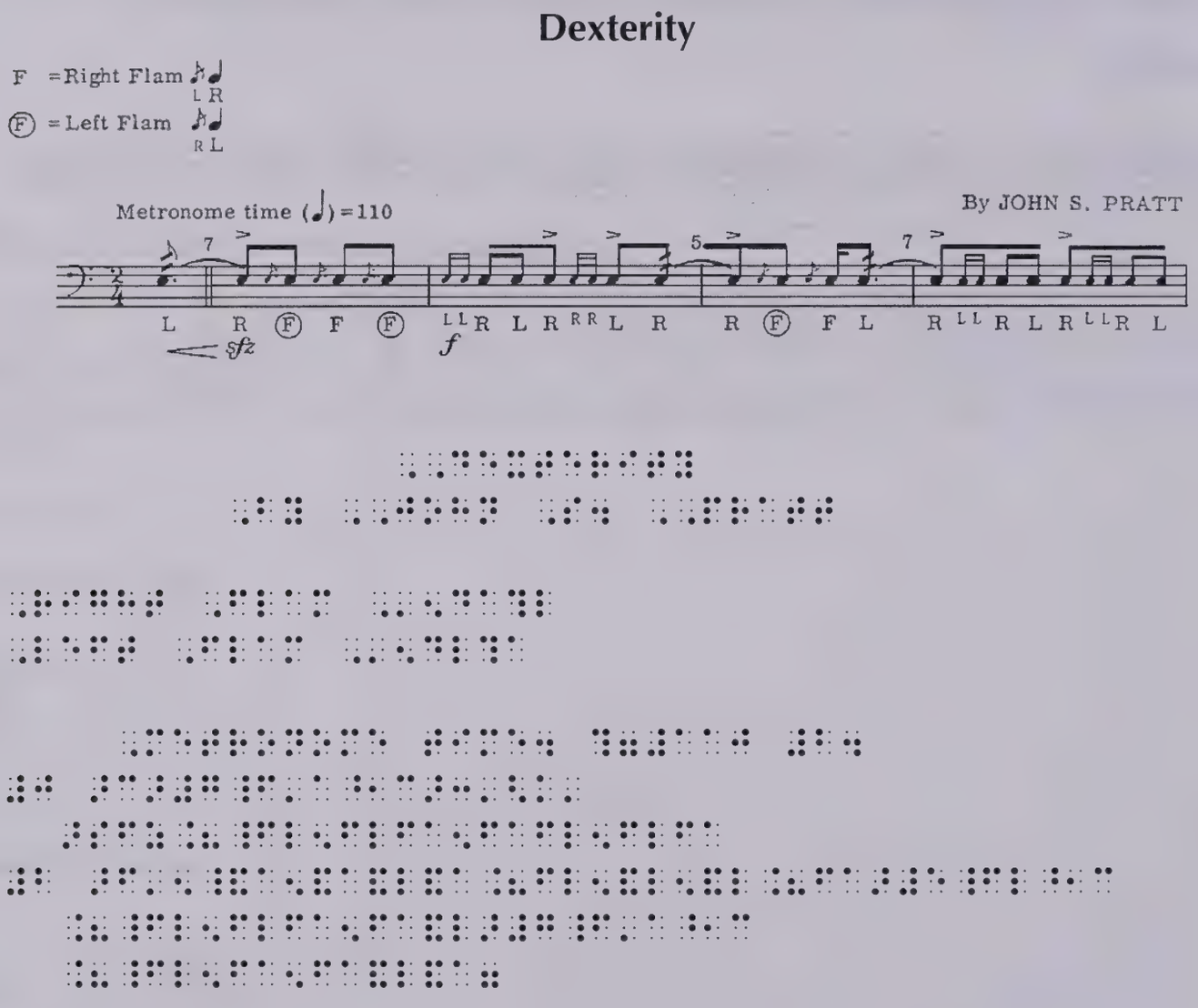
Examples 11, 12 and 13 illustrate transcriptions of increasing complexity.

Example 11

In the following transcription:

- A *sfz* is a type of accent, not a new dynamic, so the end of the crescendo must be shown before the *sfz*.

The preliminary note makes it unnecessary to include the circled and uncircled "F" in the transcription.

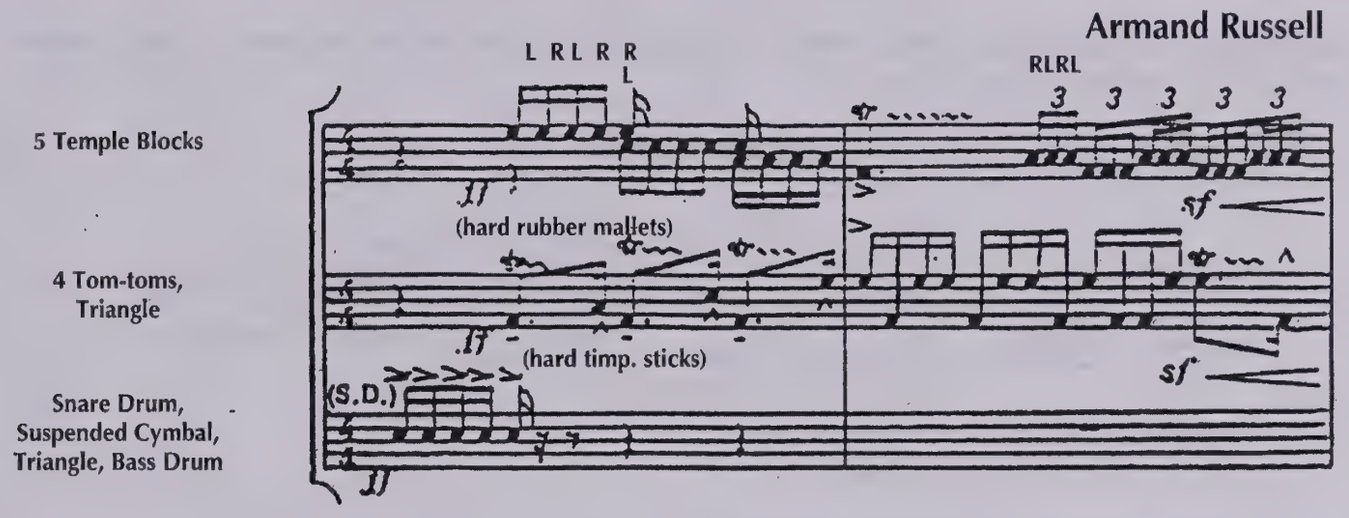


Example 12

Even though all of the instruments used are non-melodic, they are printed as notes. Each note designates an instrument to be played rather than a specific pitch. The transcriber should use the same notes as the composer used. If a term such as "hard rubber mallets" is used repeatedly, it may be abbreviated, i.e., "hrm." The abbreviations should be explained either in the Transcriber's Notes page or in footnotes.

Percussion Suite
I. Toccata
Allegro non troppo e deciso (♩=c. 104)

Armand Russell

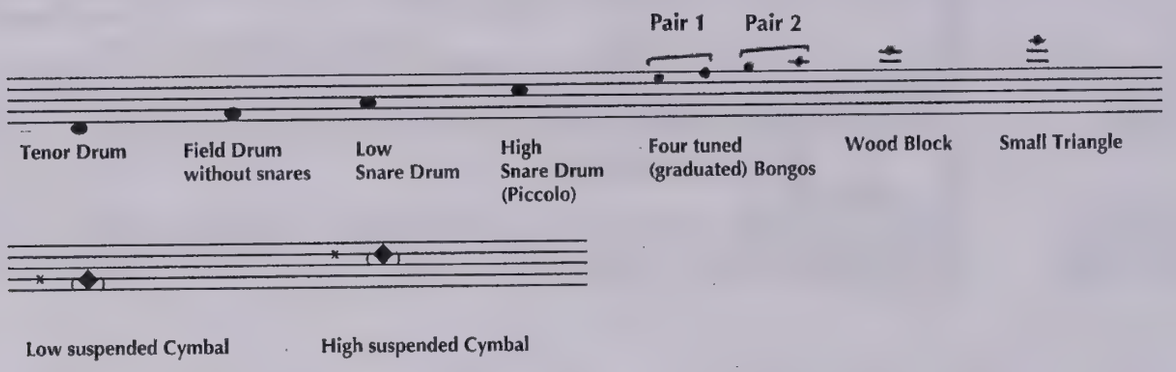


Example 13

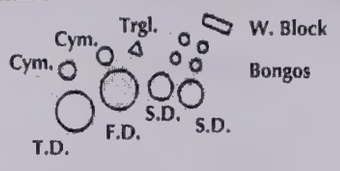
Duettino Concertante for Flute & Percussion by Ingolf Dahl (1966)

The percussion in this composition is conceived as a single large instrument comprised of many components, to be played by a single performer.

Explanatory Note

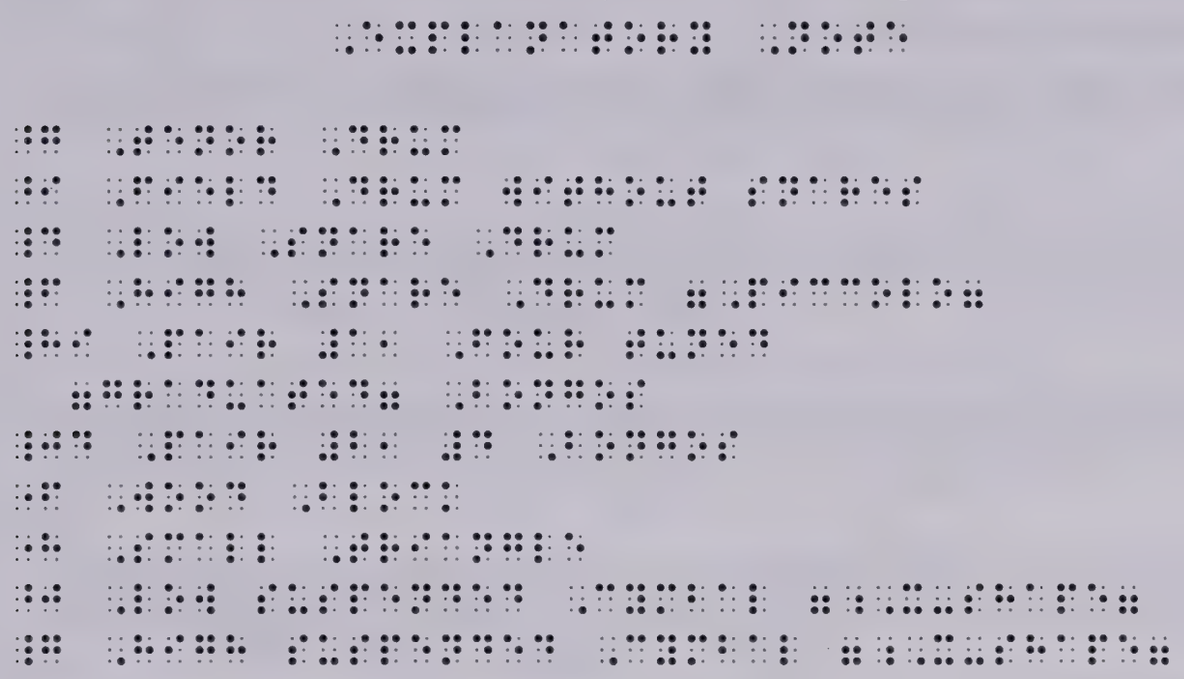


The drums must be graduated from low to high



	soft ends of double-headed sticks		slide across drum head in a wavy line
	hard ends of double-headed sticks		on the rim of drum
	rattan sticks with wound mallets		rim shot
	reverse end of rattan sticks		on side of drum
	brushes		on dome of cymbal
	reverse end of brushes (metal)		on center of cymbal
	fingernails		on edge of cymbal
	play with hands or fingers		split brush over edge of cymbal
	snares on		in dead center of drum head
	snares off		at extreme edge of drum head
	circular slide on drums or cymbals		left elbow slides from edge to center of drum (glissando)
	snap on snares		the bracketed stick remains unchanged

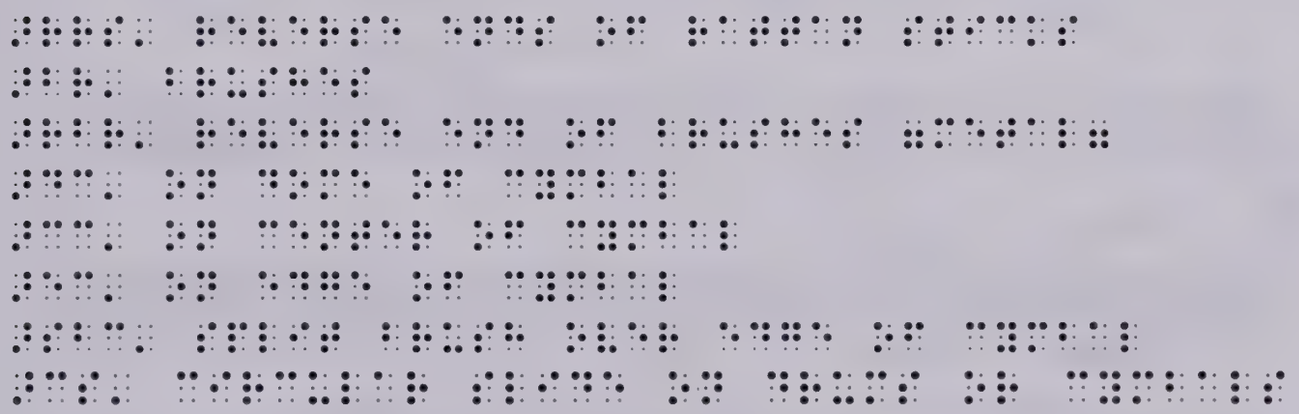
In braille the assigned pitches are followed by the names of the instrument they represent. X-shaped notes are mentioned here, so it is not necessary to indicate the X-shape in the music.



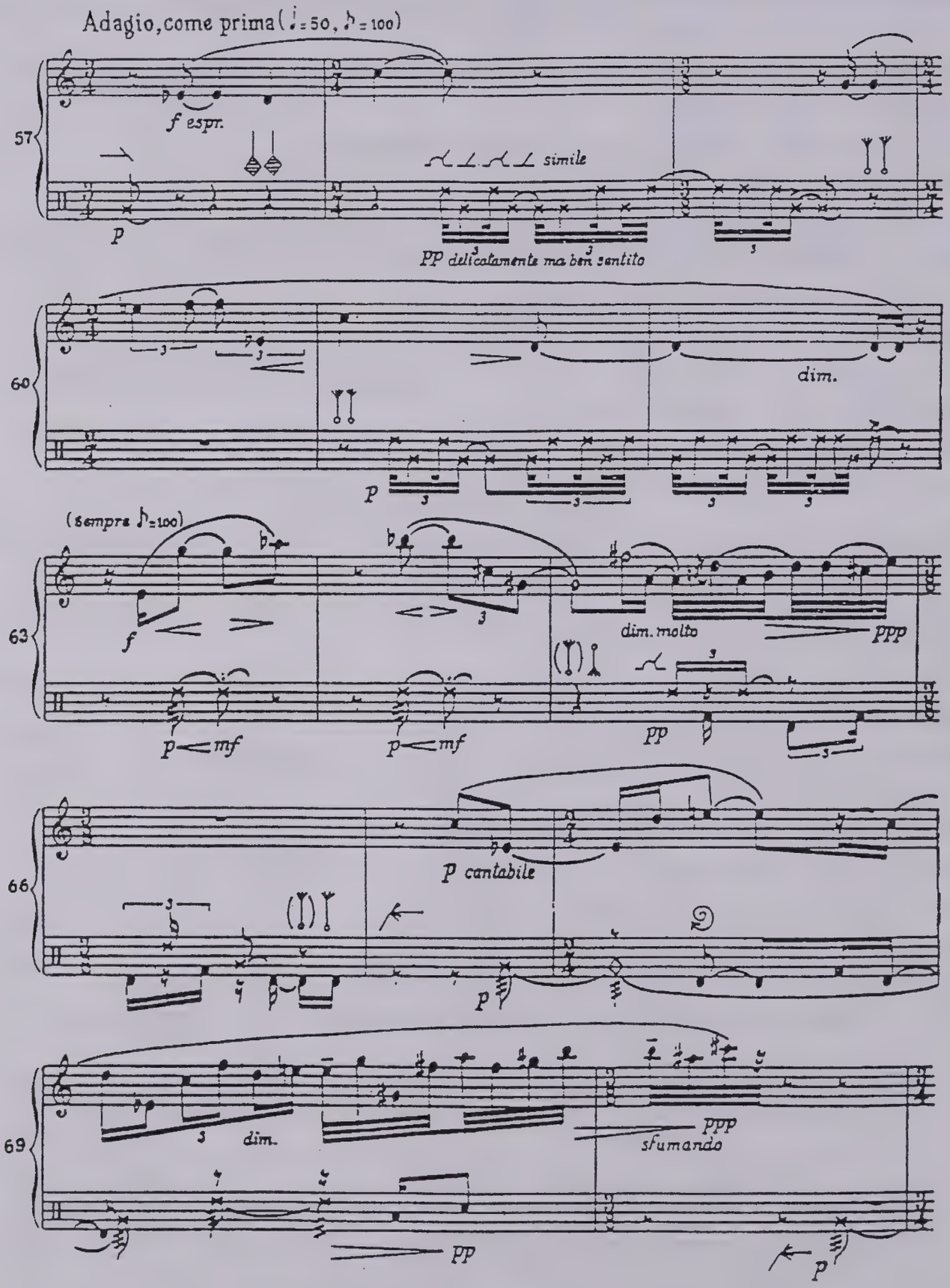
The stage diagram may be described: "Diagram: Front row: T.D., F.D., S.D., S.D. Second row: Cym., Cym., Trgl., 4 Bongos. Right rear: W. Block."

The chart of implements and techniques is preceded by: "T.N.: In the following chart the braille abbreviations are provided in place of pictorial figures."

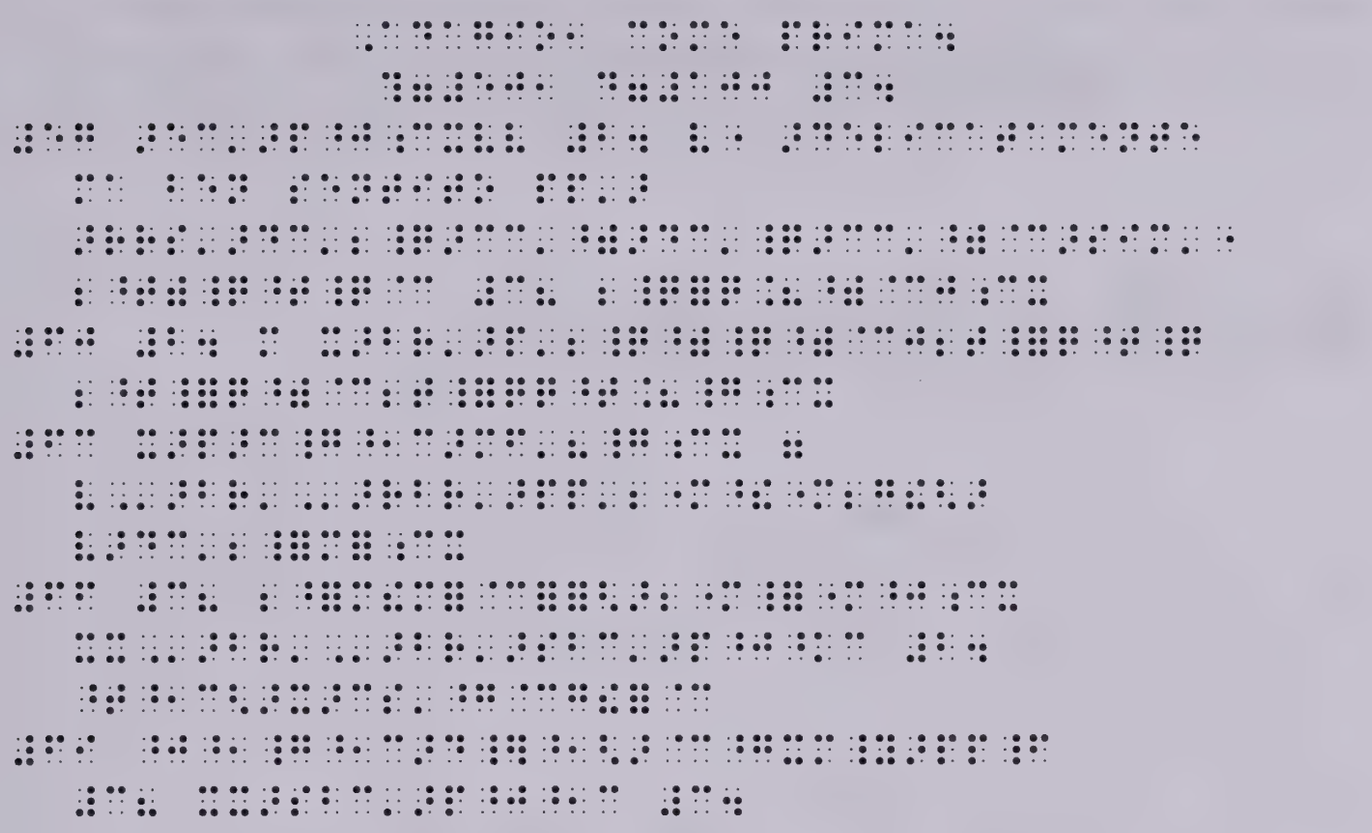
The complete chart would, of course, be brailled; the few items shown here are those that appear in the transcription of the excerpt from the score.



Duettino Concertante for Flute & Percussion by Ingolf Dahl (1966)



The fractioning of eighth notes in measures 63, 64, 67, and 69 may be transcribed as thirty-seconds. Dahl has used three slashes across the stems of notes to designate unmeasured tremolos, and he did not include the flags of eighth notes in calculating the values of the fractioning.

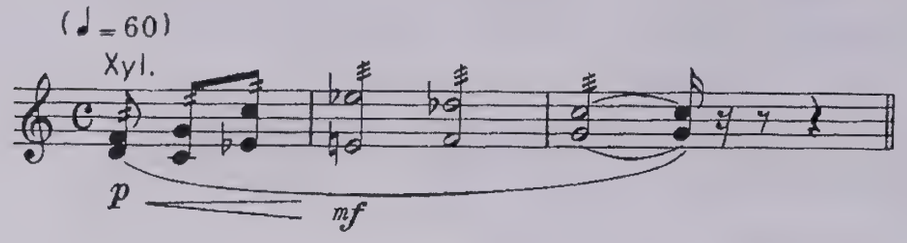


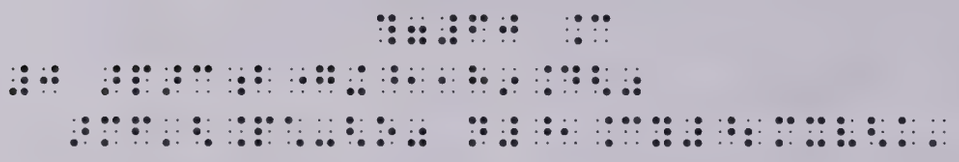
Pitched percussion

Orchestra bells, vibraphone, marimba, xylophone, chimes, etc.

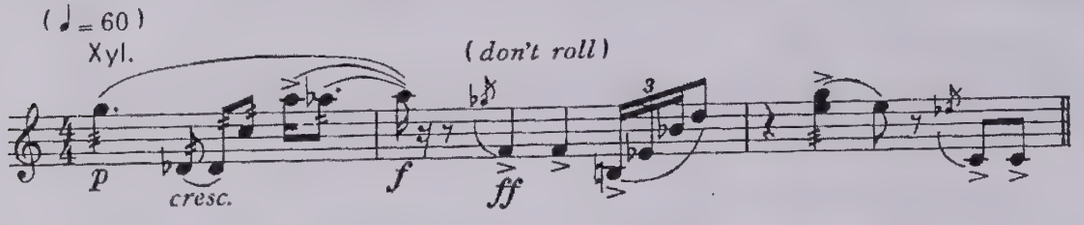
Pitched percussion music is transcribed the same as that for any other pitched instrument(s). Intervals are read downward for treble clef instruments and upward for bass clef instruments. Single-line or bar-over-bar format is used as appropriate.

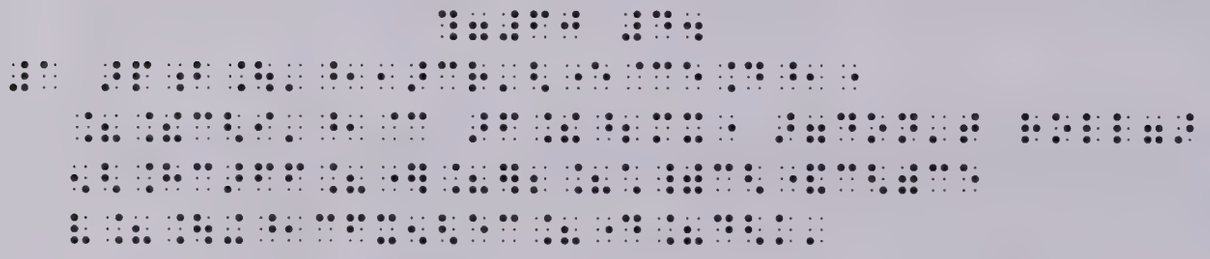
Example 14





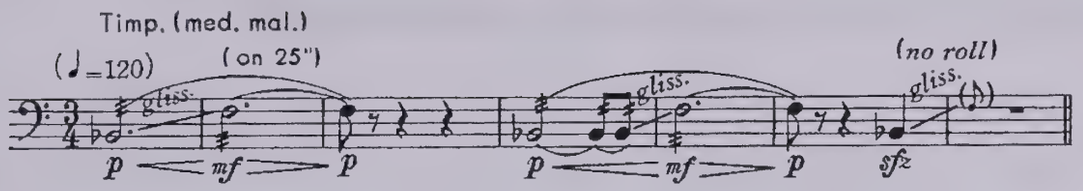
Example 15





Timpani

Example 16



Harmonic Analysis and Figured Bass

Music Braille Code 1997 thoroughly covers musical analysis and figured bass, showing both horizontal and vertical formats. Here are some illustrations, with a few comments.

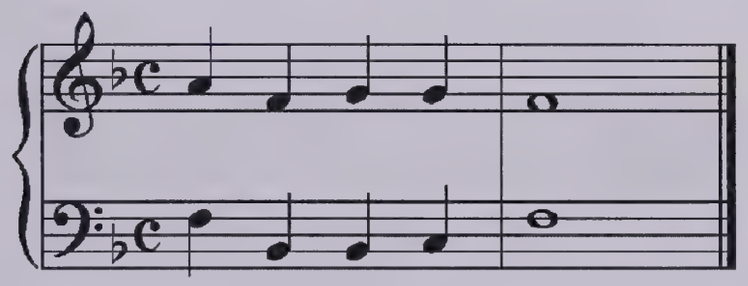
Many theory students prefer the vertical format because it more closely resembles print conventions to which their sighted colleagues refer.

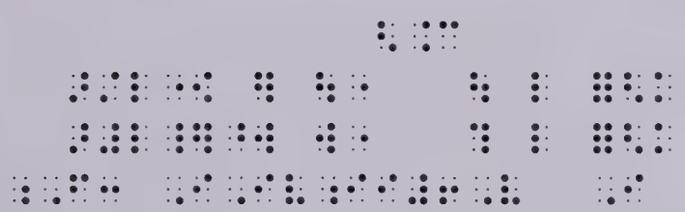
Typical roman numeral analysis

Clefs help to quickly identify the two-line texture. Generally, where a dot 5 music hyphen interrupts a measure, the print bar line, dots 123 between spaces, is not required. This transcriber has elected to combine the devices. The combination is redundant but may be helpful to the reader where there are wide spaces separating notes in a measure.

The major key is indicated with a capital "F" as in print. Major chords are represented by upper-case letters, minor chords by lower-case. Inversion numbers are shown in the lower part of the cell. It was not necessary to choose between horizontal and vertical formats because there is only one arabic numeral involved.

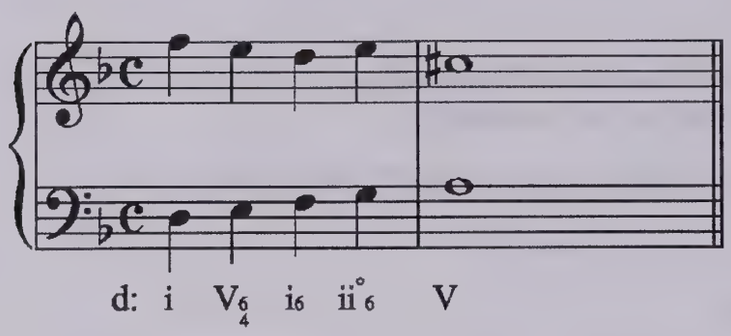
Example 1

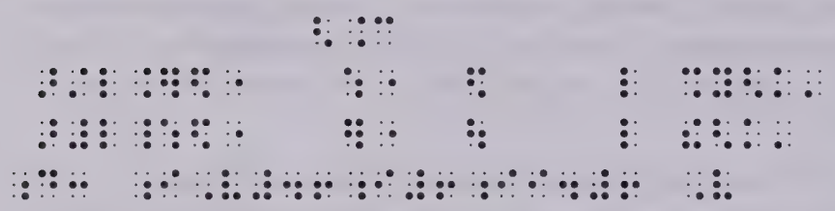




Example 2 is similar. The minor key label is shown with a lower-case letter, following the print. The V6/4 chord is written horizontally here. The code specifies that the arabic numerals must be brailled from the bottom upward, even though they are customarily spoken downward, as "six-four." As in the previous example, both hyphens and print bar line indicators have been employed.

Example 2

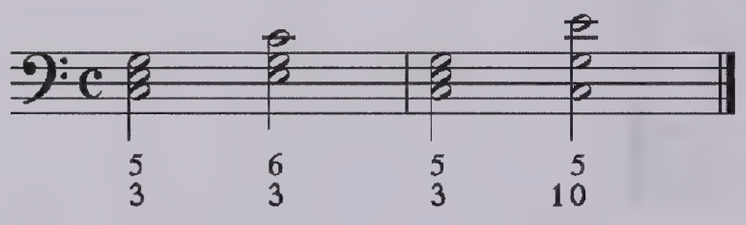


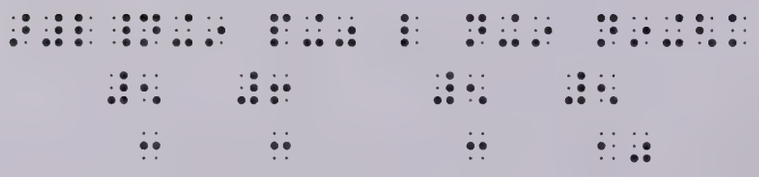


Vertical figured bass

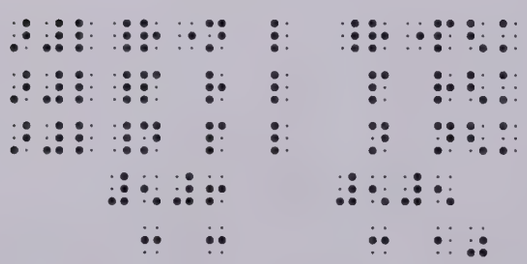
The thoroughbass figures have been brailled vertically in these two transcriptions. The notes are presented as intervals and then in open score.

Example 3: Notes as intervals





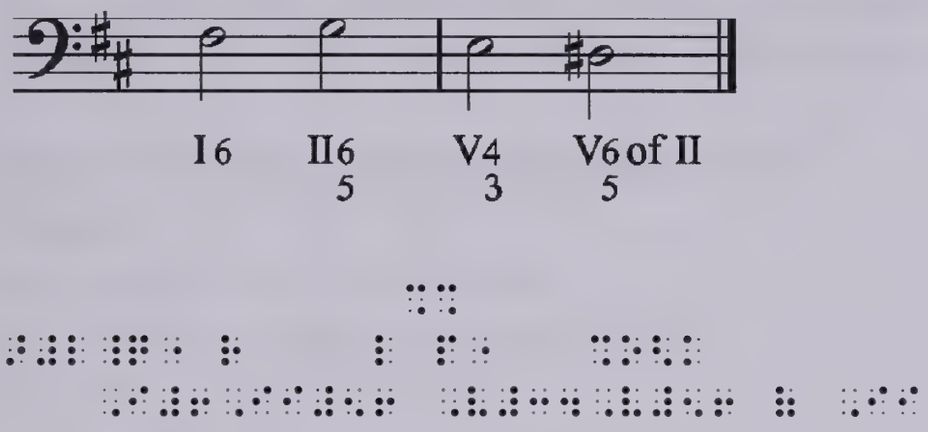
The same notes in open score:



Harmonic analysis with figured bass, horizontal

When figured bass notations indicating inversions of chords are combined with analytical roman numerals, it is preferable to present the arabic numerals horizontally, in the braille line with the roman numerals.

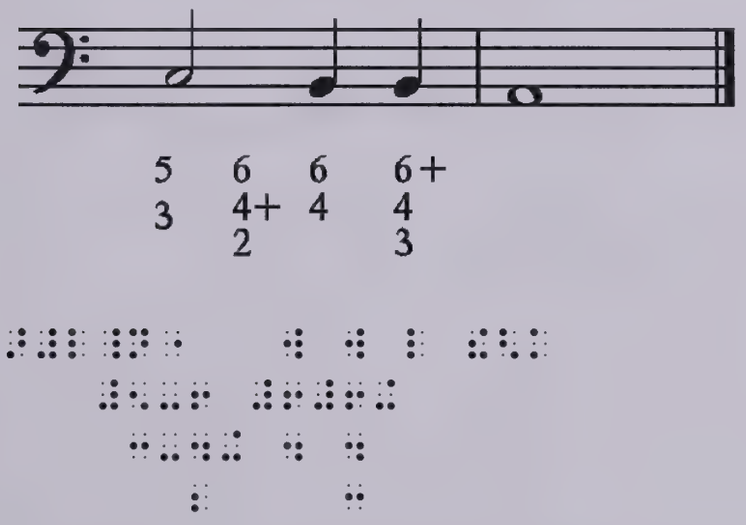
Example 4



Continuo notation, vertical

When figured bass notation is shown without analytical roman numerals, it is usually preferable to employ a vertical presentation. This illustration is the same as Example 27.26-2 in *Music Braille Code 1997,* except for the inclusion of the print bar line sign.

Example 5



Workbooks and Tests

Tests, workbooks and worksheets should be transcribed using textbook formats and procedures. The reader will then find things where they are expected. Following are some representative test questions or worksheet items.

Short examples shown in an outlined list

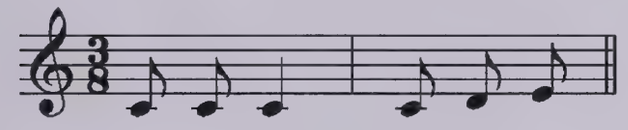
Example 1

A TN has been inserted into question 16.

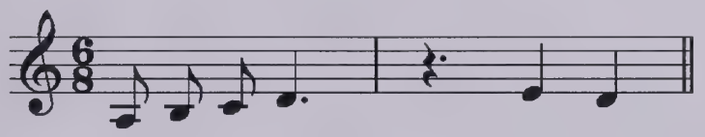
16. Identify the following meters. (6 points)
    a. *C*
    b. 7/8
    c. 12/8
    d. 3/4
    e. 9/8

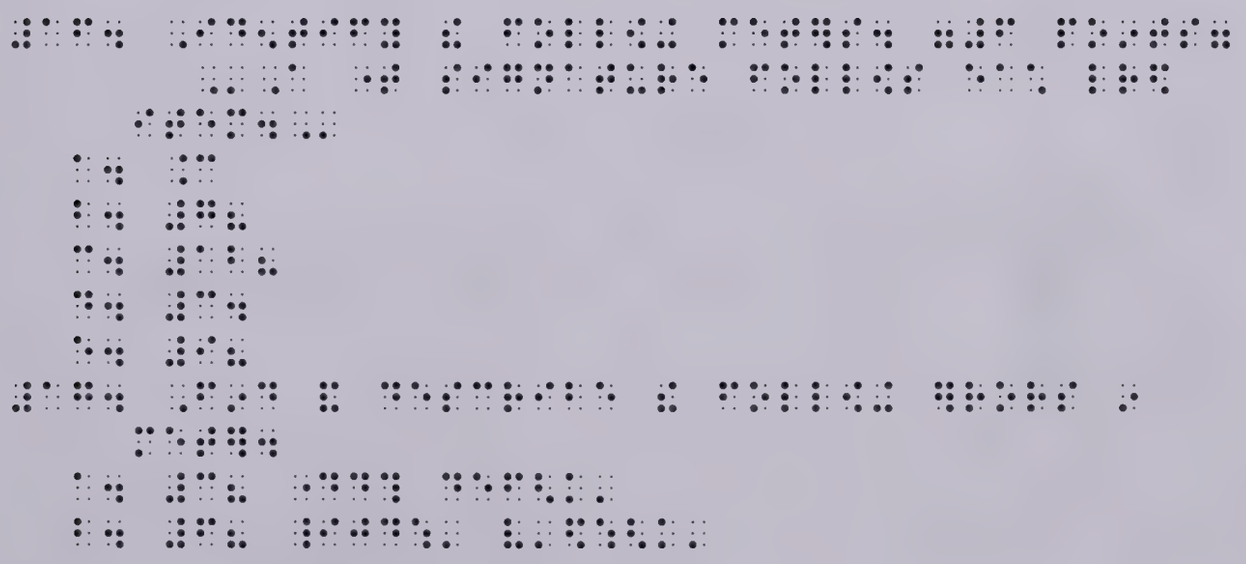
17. Find and describe the following errors in meter.

a.



b.



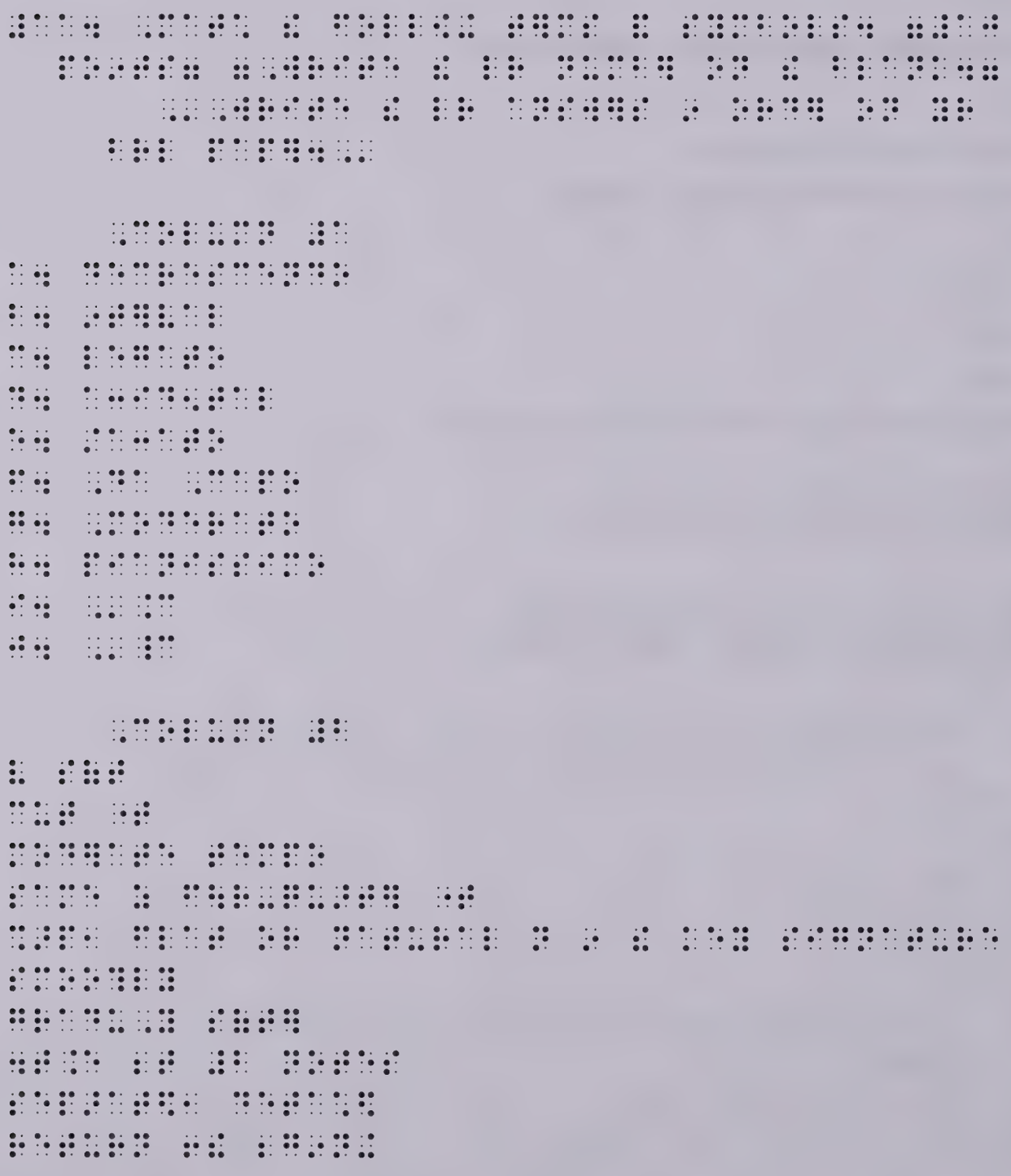


Matching columns

Braille Formats permits columns to be listed separately where a longer item spans a full line. Cell 5 headings are used for column headings in this arrangement.

Literary terms may be mixed with music signs. If all items in a column are literary or all are music, it is not necessary to use the music or literary prefixes. In this instance, Items *i* and *j* include music signs within the literary context of Column 1. A music prefix will clarify the sudden appearance of the *common-time* and *cut-time* signatures for the reader. It might have been helpful in the braille to number the items in column 2.

Example 2 (print not shown)



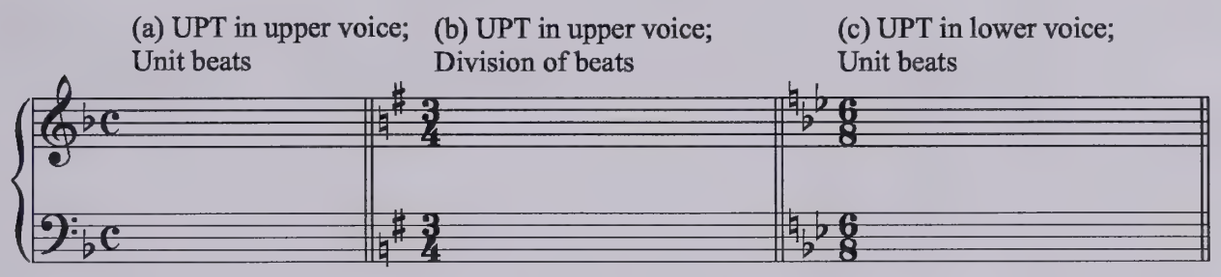
Fill-ins

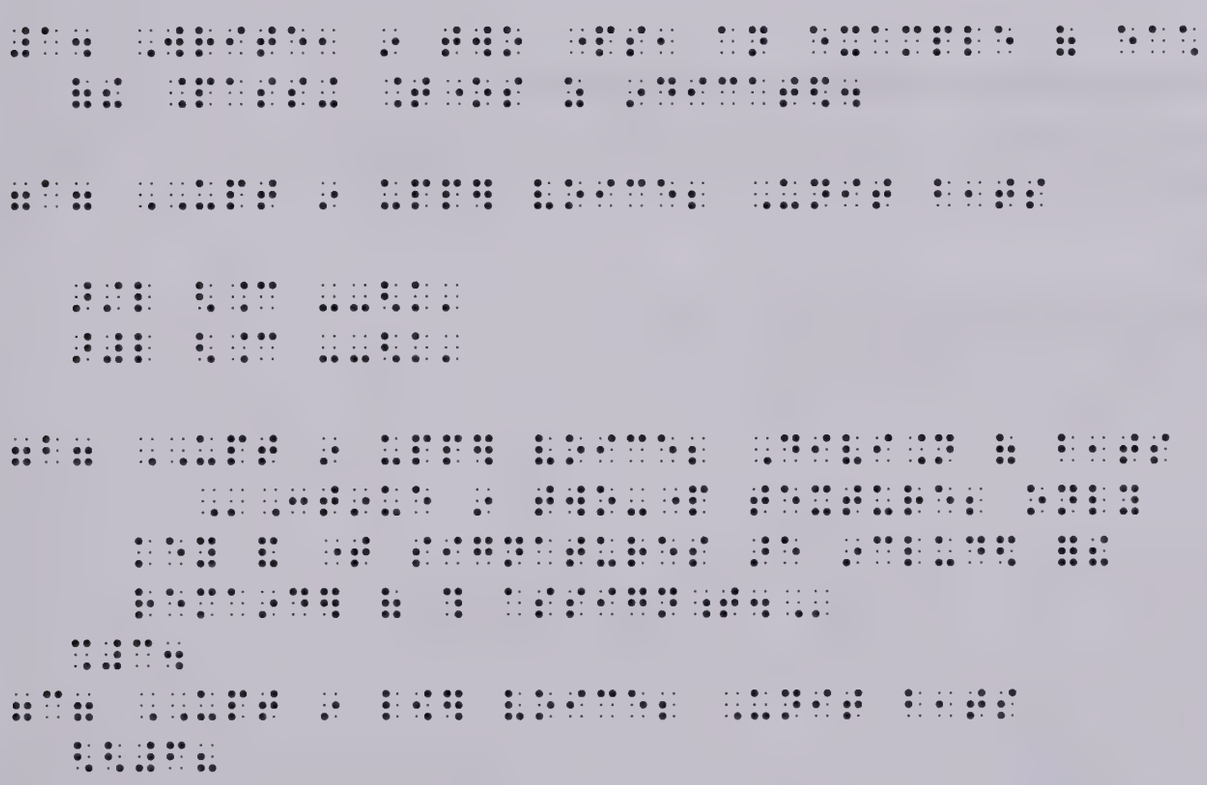
Music to be written into given staves

The following example provides blank staves into which the sighted student is to write notes. The first example in braille displays the bar-over-bar format, then omits the staves thereafter. The TN is advisable because the appearance of the print and the braille are different.

Example 3

1. Write, in two parts, an example of each of the *passing tones* as indicated.

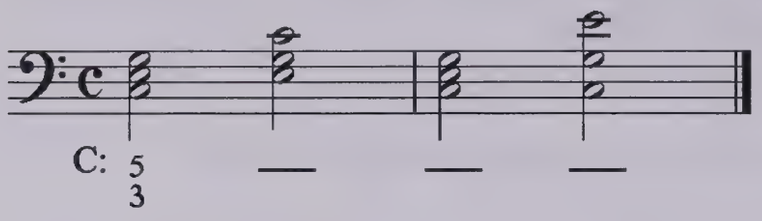


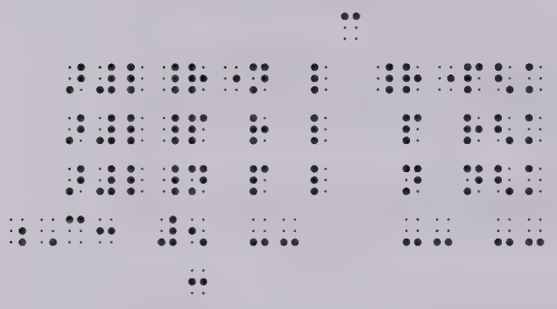


Notes given, figured bass to be supplied

The transcriber has opted for an open score instead of the more compact intervallic presentation. Either presentation is correct. The thoroughbass has been shown in vertical format.

Example 4

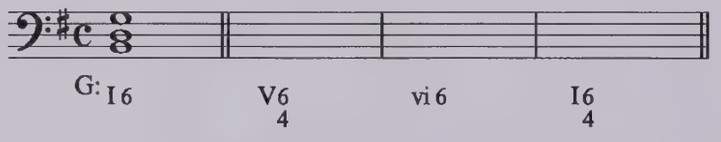


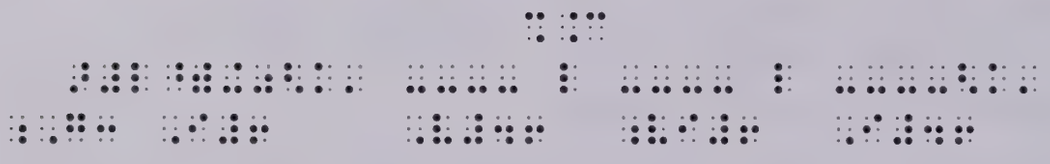


Analytical symbols to be realized by providing the notes

The transcriber has opted for the more compact intervallic presentation instead of an open score. Either presentation is correct. The thoroughbass has been shown in horizontal format.

Example 5



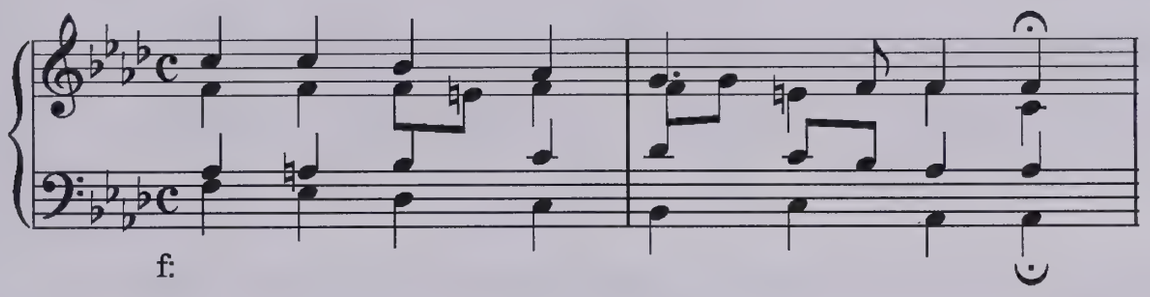


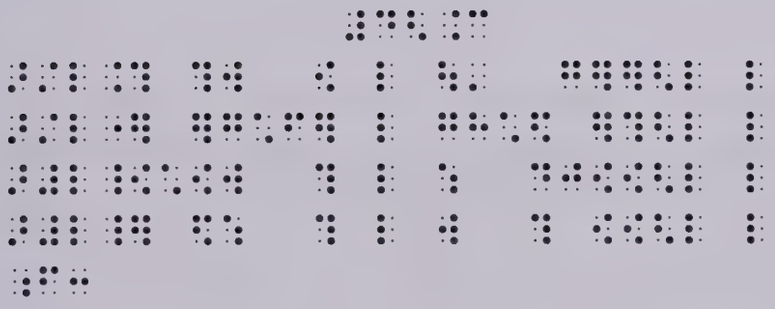
A four-part chorale to be provided with a roman numeral analysis

Bach, "*Freuet euch, ihr Christen alle*"

Since this presentation is specifically for analysis, the vertical alignment has been adjusted to allow room for eighth notes and accidentals, producing an unusual "chord-over-chord" format. A TN is required.

Example 6





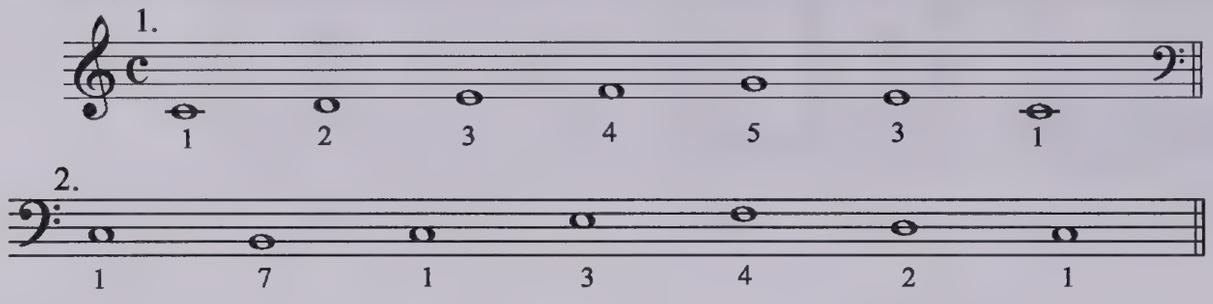
Some discretion for the transcriber

If the grade level of the exercise is known, or if the transcriber knows the degree of accomplishment of the reader, it may be advisable to make adjustments in the manner of presenting the material. The following sight-singing assignment might be presented in any of several slightly different ways.

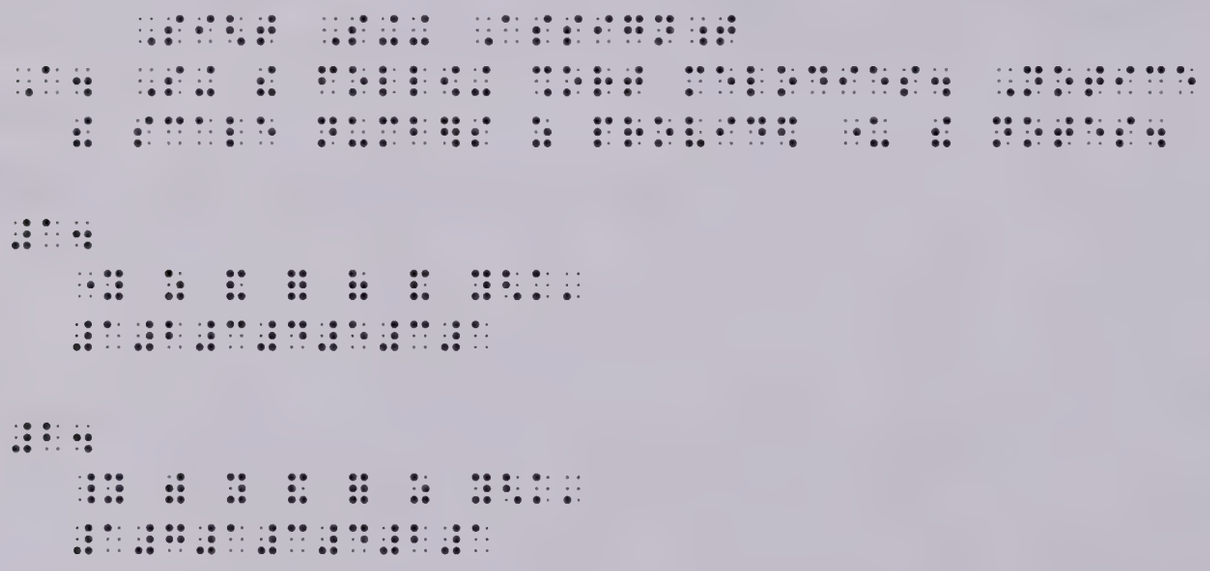
Example 7

Sight Singing Assignment

A. Sing the following short melodies. Notice the scale numbers as provided under the notes.

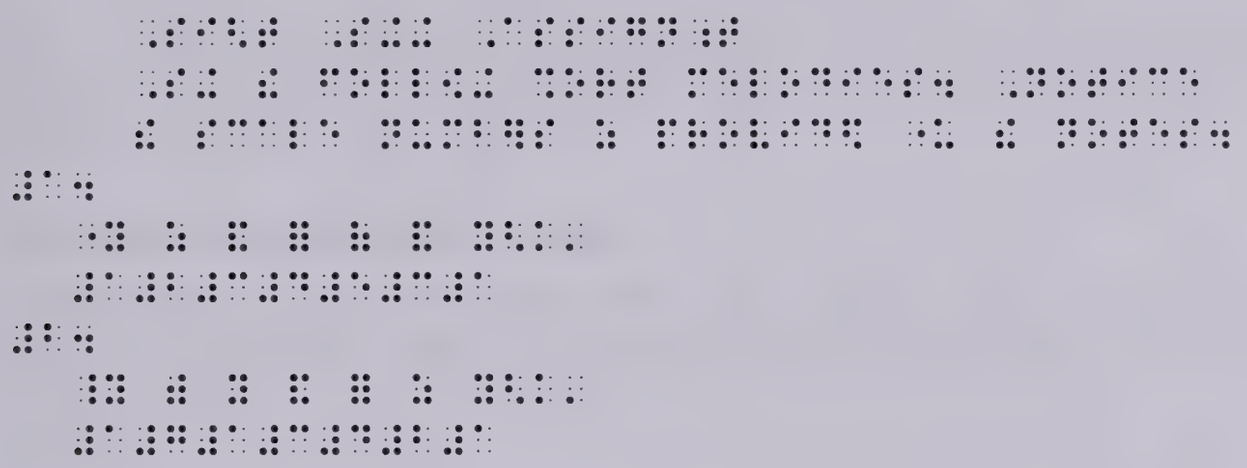


When the reader is not known and the apparent level of the exercise is elementary, the directions are given as they would be in, for instance, a spelling workbook, and the scale numbers are carefully aligned beneath the corresponding notes, as they are in the print. Blank lines separate the items.

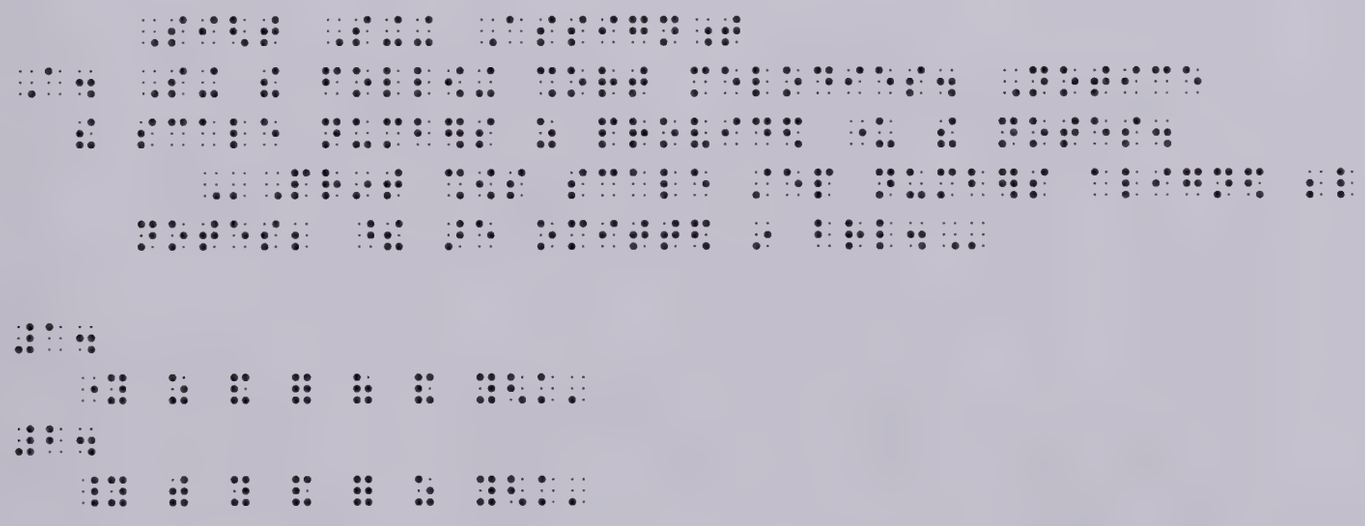


If the reader is inexperienced and not accustomed to reading in two related braille lines, or on the other hand is more advanced and does not require the alignment, the transcriber may choose to abandon the alignment in favor of showing the series of numbers uninterrupted.

For a more compact presentation, when the reader is known to be moderately adept, the assignment may be brailled using blocked instructions and without blank lines separating the items. *The outline letter "A" has been omitted, so that the format for unlettered/unnumbered exercises is appropriate.*



If the exercise is, indeed, meant for immediate sight singing and not for further study, the presence of the scale numbers may actually impede reading. In that case, the numbers may be better left out of the braille. The sighted student can ignore the presence of the numbers, or his brain may process the combination instantaneously. The braille reader must use precious time reading the numbers. Of course, a transcriber may choose this option only if he is directly involved as a part of the teaching/learning team.



Unique Analytical Diagrams

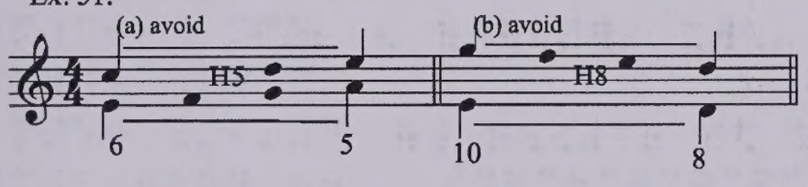
Authors often resort to special diagrams to convey information. Transcribers must then devise special ways to convey the information in the language of braille. It is obviously not possible to establish any standard procedures. The braillist's goals must be to aim for maximum clarity and to employ existing braille practices and devices as far as possible.

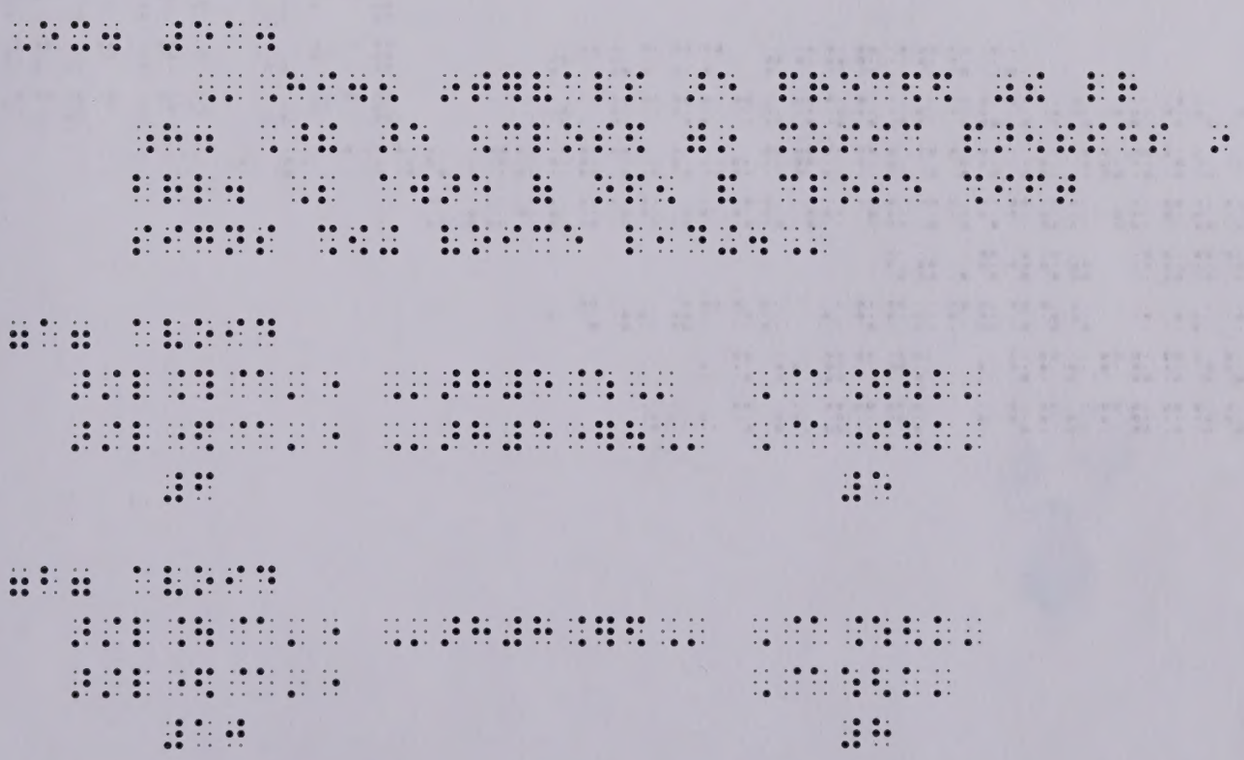
Unconventional music symbols

In this example, the stemless notes depict "hidden octaves and fifths" to be avoided in part-writing. Rather than complicate the example with the stemless-note signs, the notes that form the hidden intervals are enclosed in music parentheses between empty cells, and described in a TN.

Example 1

Ex. 51.



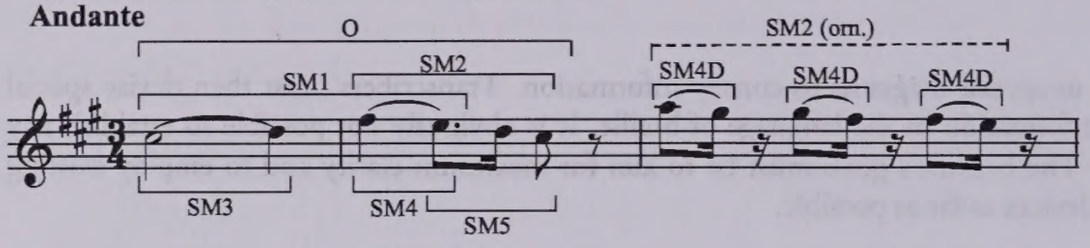


Labeled brackets

A complex mix of submotives (SM) within an original larger motive (O) are delineated in this excerpt.

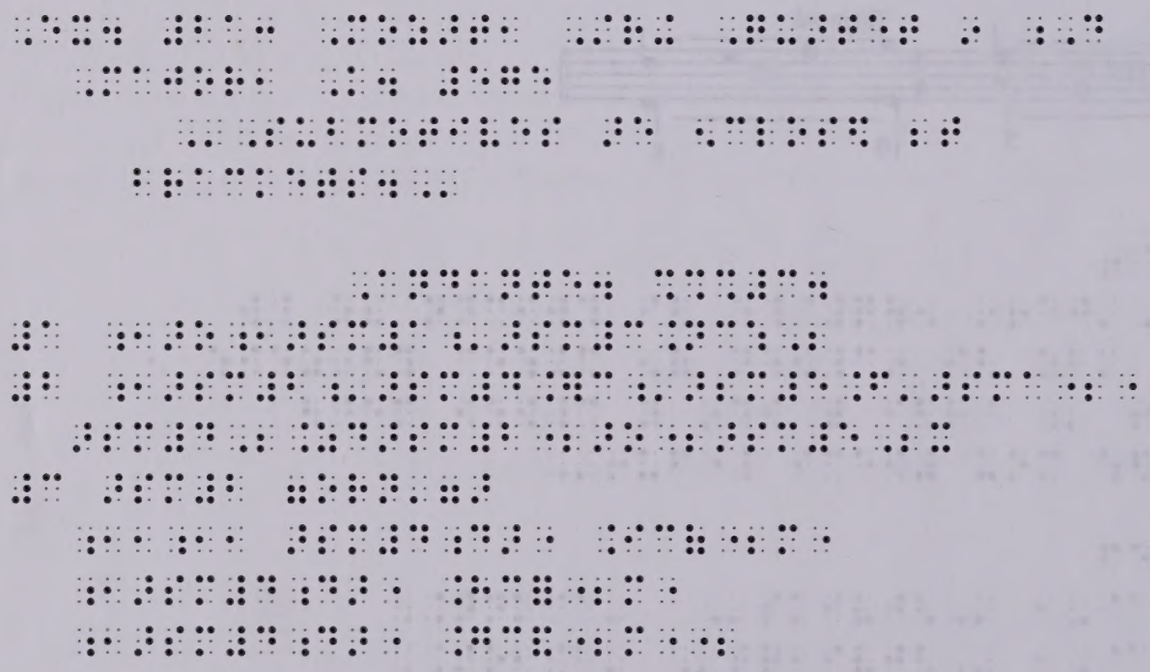
Example 2

Ex. 21: Mozart, String Quartet in D Major, K. 575

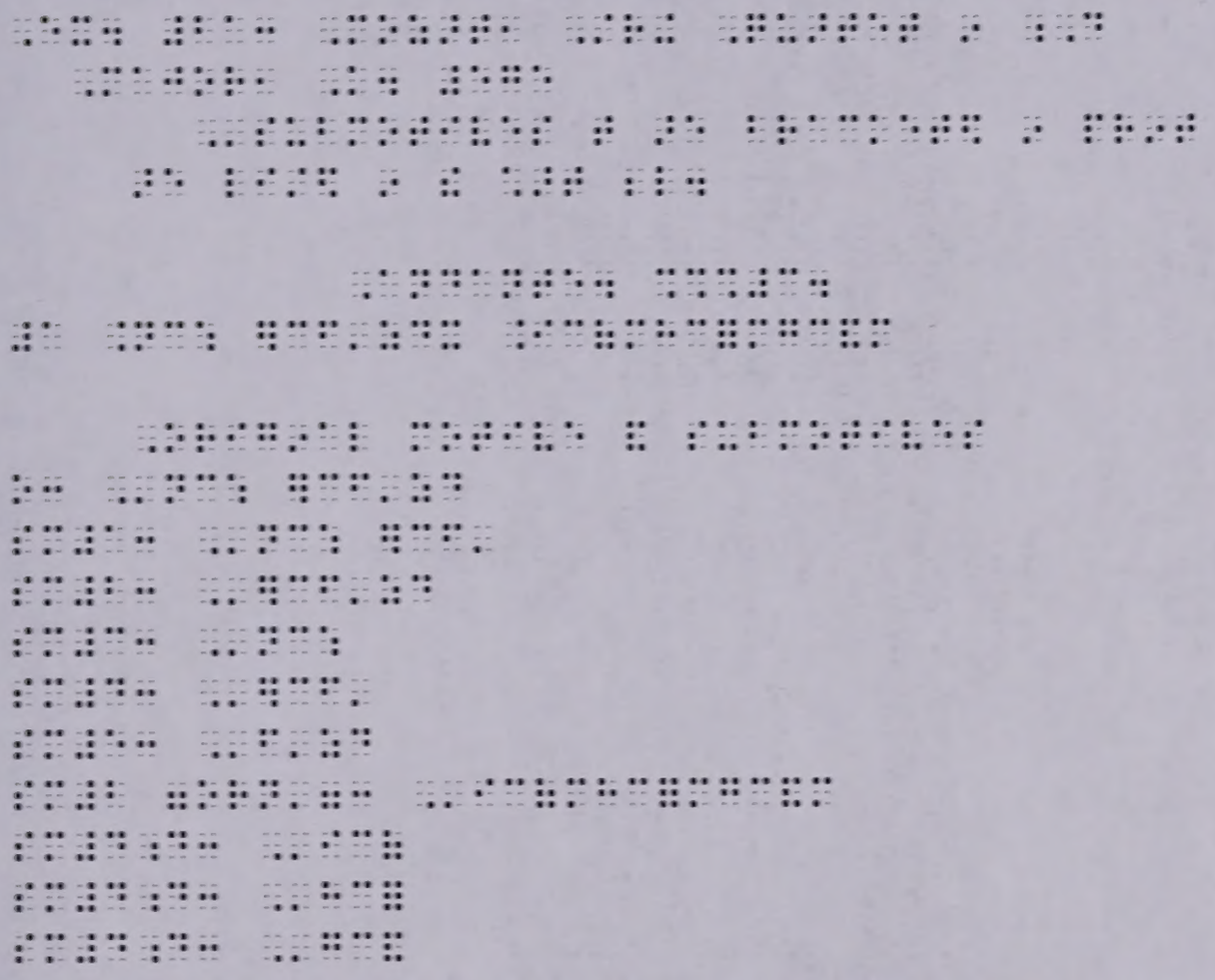


Two approaches to a braille presentation are illustrated here. The first, a very compact presentation which makes use of the brackets in the print, might be appropriate for an advanced reader who is accustomed to sorting out elaborate analytical devices. The second, presenting the melody unadorned and then making a list of the bracketed information, might be more useful to a less practiced reader, but occupies much more space. In either case, a TN is necessary to explain the nature of the diagram.

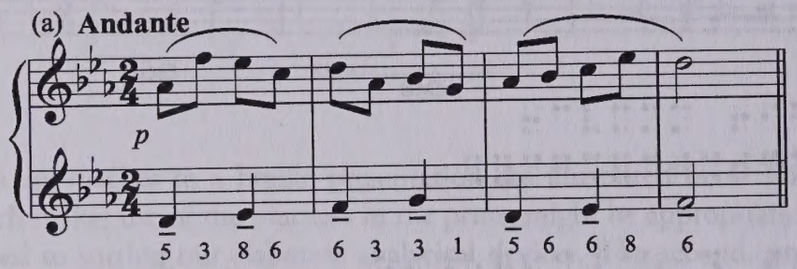
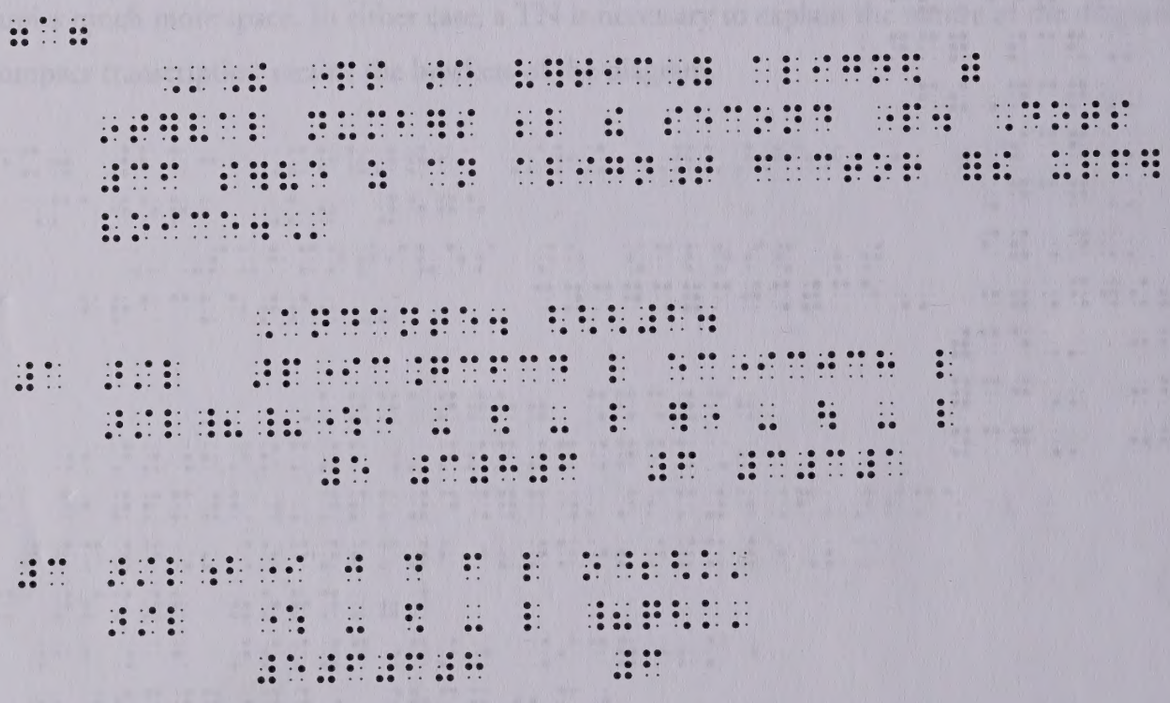
A compact transcription retains the brackets of the diagram.



The reader must refer back and forth between the music itself and the list of submotives in this spacier transcription. However, the phrase of music is short and easily remembered. The transcriber hopes that the reader, having memorized the phrase, will easily recognize the fragments that are identified as submotives.



Information aligned with notes

In print, analytical information is often aligned with the notes, above, within, or below the music system. Such information is usually best presented below the music lines of a parallel. In this example, two voices are printed in vertical alignment, and the resulting intervals are given below the lower staff (they are also frequently seen between the staves in counterpoint textbooks). As shown here, it may be helpful to a reader for the transcriber to insert dots 36 between spaces to maintain the alignment.

Example 3